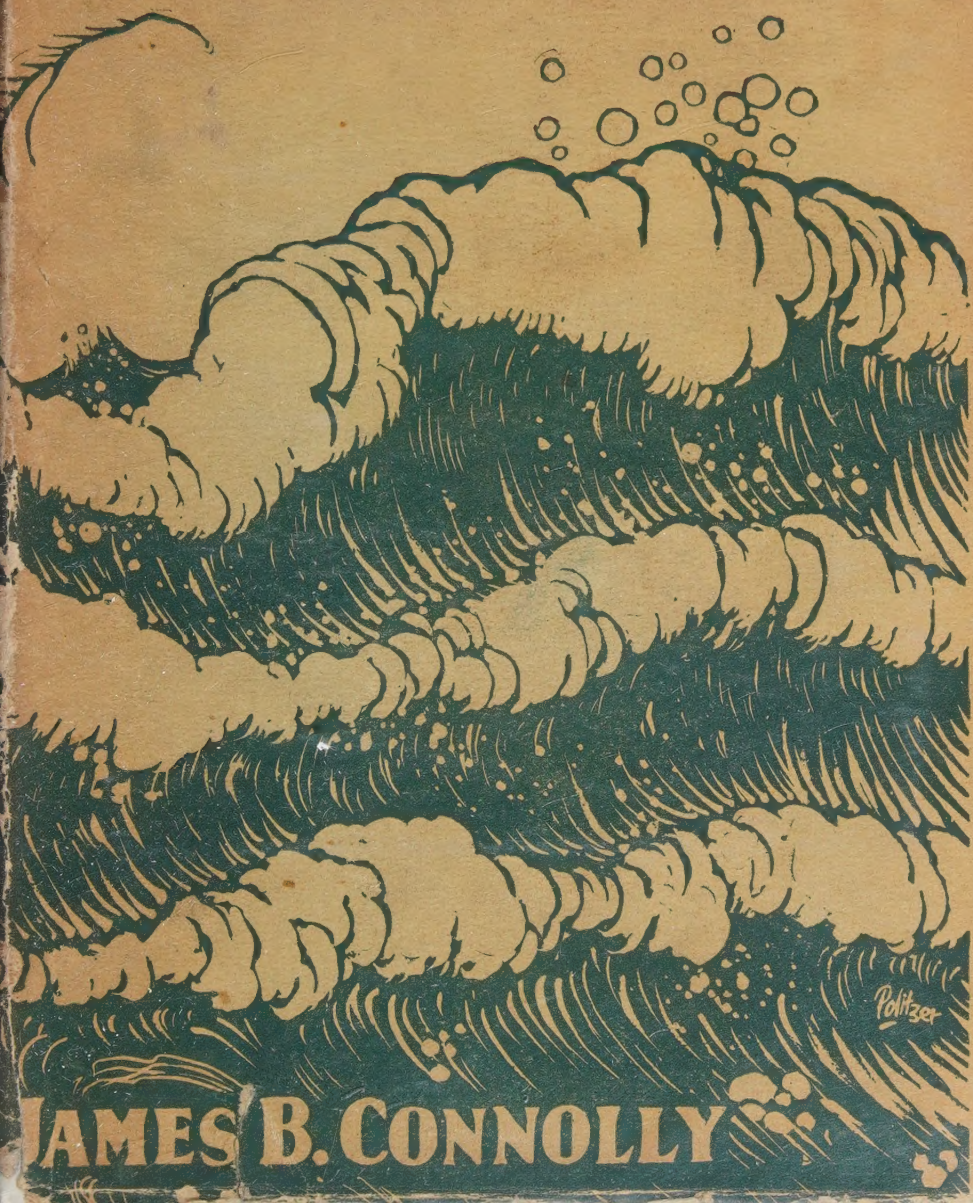


# COASTER CAPTAIN

*A Tale of the Boston water front*



JAMES B. CONNOLLY

Those who have read Mr. Connolly's "Out of Gloucester" or "The Seiners" know that they can expect of him a rattling good yarn of the sea, and a tale of action anywhere which forms a mighty good evening's entertainment. In this novel James B. Connolly writes at white heat, a tale of the sea and a tale of action, and yet a tale steeped in an unusual realism which stamps this as one of his best stories.

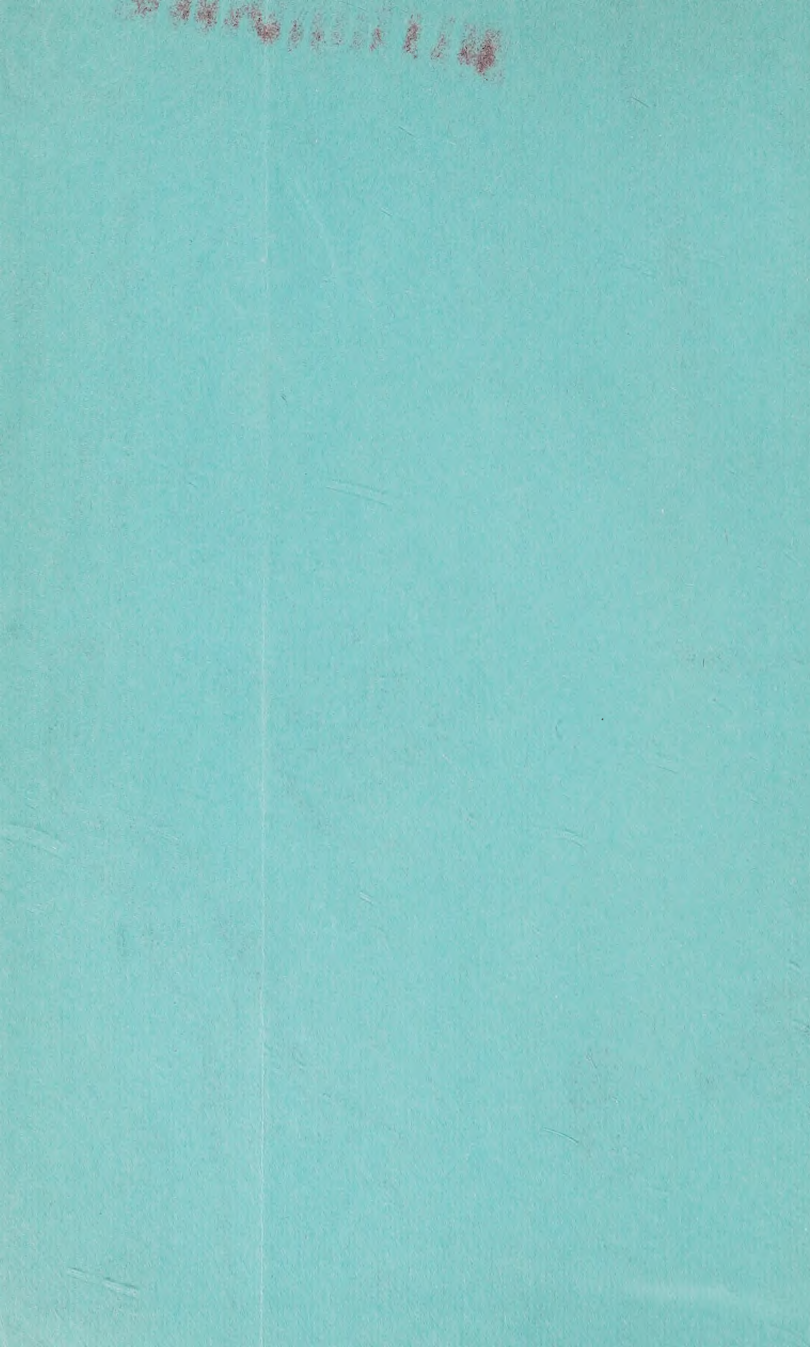
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# COASTER CAPTAIN





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*A Tale of the Boston Waterfront*

by JAMES B. CONNOLLY

Author of *Out of Gloucester*,  
The Seiners, etc.



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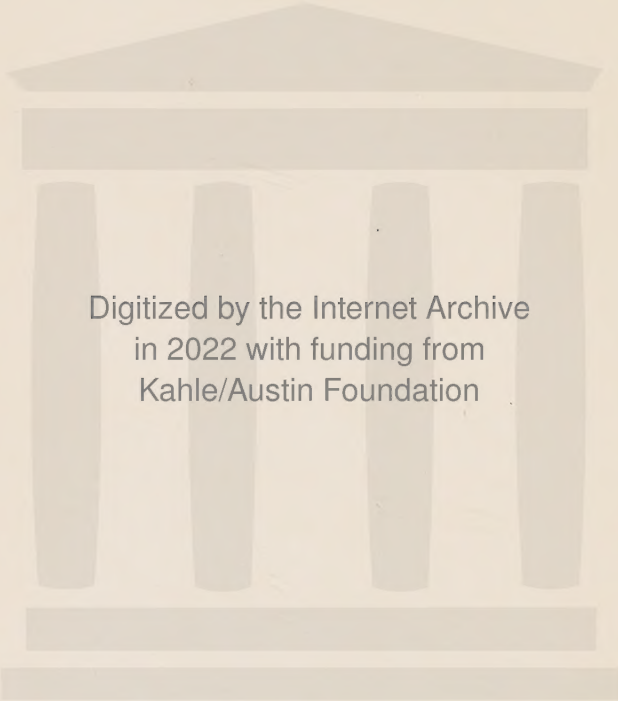
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# COASTER CAPTAIN



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CHIEF PEOPLE OF THE STORY:

Whiskey Pete, a Taximan  
Jan Tingloff, a Coaster Captain  
Harry Goles, a Rooming House Keeper  
Lena Goles, His Wife  
Goldie Brown, a Light o' Love  
Jack Hoey, a Seagoing Barkeeper  
Mollie, His Wife

MINOR PEOPLE OF THE STORY:

Pool-room Loungers, a Lodger, a Prostitute  
A Drunken Sailor, a Restaurant Manager  
Clerk and Bell Hop in a Water Front Hotel  
Officers, Stewards and Passengers on a Coast-  
wise Steamer  
A Woman and Her Baby

SCENES OF THE STORY:

A Wharf, a Rooming House on the Boston  
Water Front  
A Coast-wise Steamer Out to Sea  
A Life-raft on the Atlantic

TIME:

A Few Years Ago



## I

THE Portland boat was late again, and drawn up on Atlantic Avenue was the waiting line of taximen, chafing to pounce on prospective fares. A late boat made for better business.

The boat tied up, the gangplank was hauled into place, the passengers came scurrying up the wharf.

"Taxi? Taxi? How about a taxi?"

Impatient passengers with inquiring eyes were seized by ballyhooing taximen, bundled into waiting cabs and driven off.

Business was brisk. Only one empty cab was left when the rush was over.

"What's the matter you didn't grab off a one, Pete?" queried a passing policeman of the lone taximan.

"Oh, they're not all gone yet. Here's a one comin'—a sailor—see him?"

A thick-set man was plunging out from the wharf with long, lunging strides, and on him the tiny, twinkling eyes of the taximan were fixed.

Once fairly onto the avenue the passenger slowed down.

“What d’y’ say, Cap—a taxi?”

He was obviously a sea-faring man; even a policeman could see that, now that Pete called attention to him.

“Bet y’ a good smoke I hook him,” whispered Pete.

“You’ll bet me nothin’—you’re too foxy.” The policeman strolled on about his business.

The sailor halted to have a look at his questioner. He was a ripe specimen to look at, being fat of belly, fat of face, and owning an enormous purplish nose. The tiny eyes peeped queerly out from that mass of fat.

“What was the trouble with the old hooker this time, Cap?”

The husky voice was another proof of the man who dearly loved his liquor; but his manner was that of a most friendly soul, and being a friendly soul himself, the sailor set down the huge suit case that dangled from one arm to consider the taximan’s question.

“Her trouble? I ain’t sure. Steamer crews don’t go ’round deck shoutin’ the ship’s troubles



to passengers. But her engines, I'd say. Must 've been."

"Wouldn't yuh think the Company'd lay her off, an' have her engines fixed?"

"They only got two steamers. If they laid one off they maybe couldn't keep up their schedule."

"Any law, is there, to keep 'em from hirin' another steamer?"

"N-no. But that'd cost money and money means dividends, I s'pose."

"You said something. It's always the old mazuma—the ducats, the rubles, the pound notes, the old yellow backs that's behind everything. Steamship companies have to pay dividends. Goin' to put that coat on? Lemme help yuh, Cap."

The sailor had no thought of putting on his coat, but it was a cool sort of a morning and he was no man to dampen the spirit of so friendly a soul. He allowed the taximan to help him on with his coat.

The sailor was broad and thick enough of body without extra padding: the heavy thick cloth on his not over-tall person made him look an unwieldy, ill-proportioned figure.

"How about a taxi, Cap? Where you bound?"

"Know where I can get a good room around

here? A good clean room not too far from the water front?"

"A room in a small hotel?"

"No hotel. I don't like hotels."

"Nor me. Who does? People go to hotels because they don't know where else to go. They don't know the city ropes. I know just the place for you, Cap. Lemme have that bag. Jeepers—a young trunk! If it was my bag I'd have to be hirin' an express wagon."

"Don't be bluffin'. It ain't so heavy as all that." The sailor pushed him aside, smiling nevertheless as he tossed the suit case into the cab and got in himself. The taximan heaved his fat bulk up into the driver's seat.

The taxi swung under the El tracks, but soon turned off into a side street.

It was a street that had seen better days. The houses were of brick, with iron railings guarding front areas and broad steps leading up to wide front doors. Little lawns, or what would have been lawns were they better kept, filled in the front area spaces.

"One of the best streets in Boston one time," observed the taximan over his shoulder.

"It must 'a' been. Too bad the old families couldn't kept on livin' on such a fine street."

"Too bad, yes. But families are like steamship companies someways. Sometimes they got no money an' somebody wantin' to stick in a shoe store or a butcher shop comes along an' offers 'em a good price for their house. Maybe they won't sell, but they don't like the new kind o' people movin' in among 'em and away they go. I'm goin' to get you a good room on this street. We're most there."

Abreast of him the sailor saw a house of pretty much the same design as its neighbors—three stories and basement of brick, a railed-in front area, and wide steps leading up to a pair of doors. In a window on the first floor was a black-lettered, white card-board sign:

### FURNISHED ROOMS INQUIRE BELOW

He stepped out of the cab. "You sure there'll be a room here?"

"Sure, Cap. He's got empty rooms all the time."

"All the time? What's the matter—can't he rent 'em?"

"Huh! Sure he can! But he's pretty partic'lar who to."

"Oh-h! Suppose he's too partic'lar about me?"

"Don't you worry, Cap! I'll see you get a room. I know him."

"How much do I owe you?"

"Oh-h, m-mm—how's two dollars strike yuh?"

"It strikes me it's pretty steep for about a five minutes' haul. Five minutes more drivin' and you'd be in half a day's pay, wouldn't you? Half you people are that way. A man's willin' to give you a little the best of it, an' nothin' 'll do but you want all the best of it. Here's your money."

He passed over a two-dollar bill. Regretting then his harshness, he added a half-dollar, saying more heartily: "Buy a smoke for yourself."

The sailor yanked the suit case from the cab and faced the lodging house. On the basement wall he now noticed another sign, this one in faded gilt letters on wood:

## H. GOLES

POOL—BILLIARDS

CIGARS—GINGER ALE

The thought of a noisy pool-room under his window did not allure him; but a man couldn't



have everything made to order. The house had a look of cleanliness—no little heaps of dirt or loose papers blowing around the front of it; and the front steps were fresh scrubbed.

There was a gate in the iron rail, and inside the rail were three steps leading to the basement. There were windows in the basement wall. He descended the steps.

It was a bright sun outside, but rather dark in the low room he peered into. However, his eyesight was good. It was a good-sized room, extending back to a wooden partition. A battered looking pool-table set in the middle of the floor. Chairs and a settee were handy to the pool-table. The floor was clean swept. At the right-hand end of the partition was an open door. A man was standing sidewise in this doorway, gesturing and talking to some one in the back room.

Two young fellows were trying fancy shots at the pool-table. The one in shirt sleeves called out: "Ss-t Harry! Somebody to see yuh."

The man in the doorway faced around. He peered from under his squinting brows toward the figure in the sun-lit doorway, turned to say another word in a low tone to the invisible person in the back room.

He was a fellow of about thirty, well proportioned, rather tall, noticeably better dressed than the pair at the pool-table. He had thick fair hair and a smooth pink skin. He had a long jaw, and he walked with a curiously quick, short, almost jerky step.

“Mr. Goles?”

“I’m Mr. Goles. Looking for a room?” He smiled, showing an upper row of even, white teeth. Without waiting for a reply, he moved over to the left of the room, where was a counter with some cases of ginger ale piled up against one end of it.

From under the counter Goles brought a large book, a hotel register. “Let me see”—he poised a fountain pen over a perfectly blank page. “What name, please?”

“Tingloff. Jan Tingloff.”

“Tingloff.” He made no move to write down the name, nor to pass the pen to the sailor. His frowning gaze was directed, not at Tingloff, but at somebody behind him. It was the taximan who the sailor thought had long ago gone about his business.

“Harry, this my friend Captain Tingloff. He don’t like hotels. The bustle an’ noise an’ bell-

hops an' hat checkers an' door guys—you know—all those bums who get in your way an' don't do anything for a man except what he don't want done—they give him a pain. He wants a handy room, so he c'n hop up an' down to his ship that's down to one of the wharves. Did I get it right, Cap?"

"You got it right. I got a vessel here bein' overhauled."

"And did I leave anything out, Cap?"

"Not a thing. You got a wonderful imagination."

"I've been told so often. And the tough part of it is it's all wasted in my business. Fix him up will yuh, Harry? You'll find the Captain a good sport—a fifty-fifty guy all the way."

"I'll look after the Captain." Goles spared a glance for the taximan. "I've felt the same way about hotels myself, Captain. What's the full name again, please?"

"Jan Tingloff. J-a-n Jan. T-i-n-g-l-o-f-f."

"Jan Tingloff. Where from, Captain?"

"Portland."

"Portland? That so? Come by train, did you?"

"By steamer."

"Of course. I might have known. No real sea captain would ride on a train."

"I ride on 'em. I ride on 'em when they get me around quicker, but there's no night train out of Portland for Boston. I dunno though as I'd ride on one if there was. I'd rather a steamer to a night train. I'd rather sail to a steamer—that's if I could be sure of a good fair breeze o' wind."

"Naturally. Portland? Born there, were you, Captain?"

"Born there, yes. And my father."

"He was? Well, what—"

"Say, Harry, what can you do for a good room for my friend, the Captain?"

"I'll look after your friend, the Captain." Goles fixed the cabman with cold eyes. Curiously staring eyes they were, Jan noted, with abnormal pupils. "You can go along."

"I know I can go along, but I don't go along till I see my friend fixed up. Get me?"

"Oh, all right. I didn't know he was such a friend of yours. How long shall you be staying, Captain?"

"M-mm, two weeks anyway."

"Two weeks? I can give you a large, airy



room on the second floor, set back from the street and sufficiently elevated so that you won't be hearing the noise of cabs or front doors. And I can name you a weekly rate."

"How much a week?"

"Ten dollars a week, Captain, to you."

"Ten dollars to me?"

"Special rates to sea captains."

"Specially high or low, which?"

"Now, Captain"—Goles leaned in the most friendly way across the counter—"you would pay that much out in tips, if you had a room in a good hotel. And you can"—his glance shifted from Tingloff to somebody at the other end of the room. He bent lower across the counter, speaking now almost in a whisper:

"You'll be your own boss here, Captain. You can come and go as you please here."

"Go and come as I please? Couldn't I anywhere?"

"Sh-h! Not so loud, Captain, please."

Curious to know what Goles had been staring at, Tingloff turned and saw a smiling young girl standing in the backroom doorway.

"Mr. Goles means"—the friendly taximan was speaking up again—"you won't have a crew of

bell-hops an' waiters an' door-openers an' shutters runnin' 'round you all day."

"Oh, all right. Anyway, I can't spend all day lookin' for a room. Which way?" He bent down for his suit case.

"Excuse me, Captain, but money in advance, please."

"In advance?"

"A rule of the house, Captain. When we make a rule for one, we have to make it for everybody. You see, with all the unreliable fly-by-night people running in and out of a big city, a man in my position has to protect himself. I would like to make an exception for you, but if I did, other lodgers would be sure to hear of it, and where would I be then, Captain?"

"I s'pose that's so." Jan reached to a coat pocket inside his ulster and drew out a well-worn, bulging wallet. He poked through a layer of bills—they were mostly large bills—until he found a ten. He was no fast thinker, but his ears were quick enough. From one of the lounging youths near the pool-table he heard the half-whisper: "The husky sailor must be flashin' some roll—look at Harry's eyes!"

Jan did not mind that. He rather enjoyed it.

He was simple enough to get a thrill out of it when people who took him for a poor struggling seafarer betrayed their surprise on discovering that he was not quite that.

Goles took the bill, the sailor replaced his wallet, Goles not taking his eyes from it until it was once more tucked away in the inside pocket. He then raised one hand on which shone a big ruby stone, the sailor noted. Goles extended a beckoning finger and the smiling girl in the back-room doorway came forward. The youth in shirt sleeves gave her a furtive pinch in passing.

"Ss-t—don't! Harry 'll see yuh."

She giggled, spread palms behind her, at once inviting and warding off a possible further liberty, which the shirt-sleeved youth at once took, muttering: "Hell with Harry!" He pinched her again, whispering hoarsely: "Go to him, Kid!"

In smiling confidence the girl undulated toward the group at the counter. She had a pretty figure and an impudent, pretty face.

"Captain, let me introduce my cousin, Miss Goldie—Brown."

Jan faced about. He lifted the front brim of his hat. "Glad to meet you, Miss Brown."

Goles had stepped into the hallway, and was

now shouting: "Hello up there! You there? Well, hurry on down!"

"And I'm sure glad to meet you, Captain. What's your whole name, did Harry say?"

"I think he forgot, Miss, but it's Tingloff—Jan Tingloff. Ti-n-g-l-o-f—Tingloff."

"Jan Tingloff." As if liking the sound of it, she said it again: "Captain Jan Tingloff. Listens like a real honest-to-God man's name to me, Captain." She had a cute little nose and a red mouth,—too red, as were her cheeks, for Jan's taste. Her eyebrows were too black, too, though no more so perhaps than many a respectable girl's that he had seen in Portland. She was not at all an ill-pleasing person to look at: the dull light of the basement softened the effect of the crude high coloring, and she did smile easily.

Once more Jan could hear Goles shouting behind him: "What's the matter up there? You heard me, didn't you? Hurry, I said. Come on! Come on!"

A young woman listlessly descended the back stairs and entered the basement hall. Her black waist and skirt were well worn, shiny and patched. Her hands were covered with frayed cotton gloves.



"Come on, get a move on!" Pointing to Tingloff's suit case, Goles pushed her toward it. Without a glance at Goles, she put one hand to the case. She had to take both hands to lift it. She held it so until the guest should be ready. Presently, finding it too heavy to be holding up, she let it sag back onto the floor. Jan, standing with his back to her and striving to reply to the rapid questions of the smiling Goldie, did not even know that she was there.

Motionless, speechless, the house girl waited. Once she glanced up at his back—a broad ungainly back in a thick coat. Above the wide back the man's head was bent toward the beguiling face of Goldie. The house girl could not see the new guest's face, but the hard hat which set atop of his big blond head looked to be two sizes too small for him. A ridiculous figure he was, another easy victim for the girl Goldie. A ripple of disgust spread over her face.

"What are you sneering at?" Goles gripped her by the shoulder, swung her around and said, this more loudly:

"Go on, go on up! Make that large, middle second floor room ready at once for the Captain."

With no word or glance the girl staggered off.

By taking both hands to it she managed to keep the suit case from dragging along the floor.

Jan had heard Goles when he raised his voice to give instructions about his room. He turned to give aid with his suit case. It was gone. He peered into the half-dim hallway and saw a slim slip of a girl dragging it up a flight of stairs.

He lifted the brim of his hat hastily to Goldie, muttered: "Excuse me, Miss," and hurried through the hallway and up after the girl and his baggage.

Goles waited in the hallway until the footsteps of the pair were beyond his hearing. He re-entered the pool-room, beckoned Goldie to him: "He'll be here two weeks, he said. If you don't have him mortgaging his ship for you before that, Kid, then I'll say you're slipping. Two weeks. But don't waste any time. Step on up and get to work on him."

Goldie stepped into the hallway and up the stairs.

The taximan leaned across the counter and allowed his eyes to twinkle at Goles. "I'm still here, Harry." He tapped his chest. "Me, little me, who navigated the prize ship to port. Come over, come over!" He rubbed one thumb and two

fingers together. "Come across with the roubles, the pesos, the pieces of eight!"

From a roll of small bills Goles fished out two ones and passed them over. He made a face giving them over. The taximan made a face taking them.

"Huh, two bones! How about a little drink?"

"You mean for me to *give* you a drink?"

"For God's sake! Don't you s'pose I know you by this time? I'm buyin' a drink."

"Come out here."

The front wall of the basement hallway was like any other wall to look at; but to Goles's touch a panel swung open and a dark recess was revealed. Goles took a bottle and a glass from off a shelf, poured a moderate-sized drink, which he pushed towards the taximan, who promptly pushed it back.

"A drink I asked for. Gimme a full-sized man's drink."

"Oh, a double-header? Double-drink double-price."

"Did I argue the price? Fill her up. That's better."

The taximan threw back his head and let the

drink sizzle down his throat. "B-r-r-r! Another one. B-r-r-r! Where'd yuh get that stuff?"

"Good is it?"

"Good hell! Rotten. What you askin' for it?"

"You know the price."

"I do, poor me. Here y'are. But take my advice and don't ever feed that stuff to the able-bodied skipper who's just gone upstairs."

"Does he drink?"

"I don't know. But don't pump any o' that stuff you got into him. Two drinks o' that and he'll run away to sea."

The taximan shuffled back to the pool-room. The youth in the shirt-sleeves hailed him.

"Say, Whiskey, I guess you don't know how to pick 'em, what?"

"Pick 'em is right, son. D'y' know the difference in just a day's work and a good day's work? It's pickin' your fares. Look 'em over. On rainy nights after a theaytre, say, when yuh know yuh got time to grab a fare an' come back an' get another—it's all right then maybe to pick 'em fast an' quick regardless. But when there's on'y one goin' to be had—same's to-day at that Portland boat—a fine day an' the trolleys handy, why, look 'em over.

"Sometimes o' course they'll pick you first. I don't know what there is about me that attracts people, but I dumped a fare at the North Station last night an' I'm hustlin' off again, when a sedate-lookin' party shinnies up to me. 'Kebby,' he whispers, 'anything doin' 'round town? Come to town for a little spote, Kebby.' He gives me a most devilish wink—a highly respectable lookin' party with a white shirt an' a black bow tie an' one o' those black straw suit-cases. I tell him what he wants to hear an' I deliver him to where he wants to go. The meter says sixty cents, and sixty cents he slips me, and a cigar for a tip. A cigar! I might 'a' known it—he was wearin' yeller gloves, too. Here's the cigar."

He teetered the cigar under his nose, scrutinized the band and tossed it to the youth in his shirt sleeves. "Here—you're still young an' strong. Try it, you!"

He buttoned up nis old coat, drew on his worn and oily gloves, looked back over his shoulder at the landlord: "If I was you, Harry, I'd go easy with that big skipper. I wouldn't want him to be grabbin' me by the throat and him real mad."

"Yes? Well, you were always a wise one and

you're still driving a taxi to prove how wise you are."

"That's right—I'm still drivin' a taxi."

"Well, hustle along, you fat-faced rummy, and drive it. Telling me how to run a rooming house! If I tried to tell you how to run a taxi, you would listen to me, wouldn't you?"

"Oh-h, I dunno. If you'd been hangin' around cabs before I was born, maybe I would. There's more in rentin' rooms, Mister Know-it-all, than just chargin' high prices for 'em. But out I go. B-r-r-r!—into the cold world for me and earn my daily bread."

"And the drinks. Don't forget the drinks."

"Right. And the drinks. There's a sayin' that a man can't live by bread alone, the same comin' out of a Book that you never read."

"How do you know I never read it?"

"If you did, it was with your eyes shut. If you'd read it with 'em open, Mister Wiseman, you'd know a whole lot more an' not a half so much. So long!"

Jan Tingloff saw a slim girl trying with both hands to draw his suit case along the first floor hallway. He hurried to overtake her.



"Here, that's no load for a girl. I'll take it."

His hand, as he reached down to take the bag from her, came down over one of hers. She snatched hers away. A smothered angry word or two escaped her.

"Did I hurt you, Miss? I didn't mean to. I was trying to help you with the bag." A cotton glove had slipped off her hand. Jan picked it up. "This yours, Miss?"

She took the glove without answer, hastened through the first floor hall and up a second flight of stairs. Making light work of the bag, Jan hurried after her. Stair rails and hall wainscotting were of mahogany, Jan noticed, and the floors and stairs of old oak. Floors and stairs were bare of covering.

A ring of keys hung by a chain from the girl's waist. She worked a key off the ring, unlocked the door of a room on the second floor, threw it open and stood aside for Jan to enter.

He set down his suit case, tossed his hat onto the bed. It was not a large room and there was but one window to it. The window looked out on a side alley. A straight-backed chair, a small rocker, bed, dresser, washstand and wash-set, two towels on a rack, made up the furniture.

"Will it suit you, do you think?" She asked it in a most indifferent tone, as if the question were pure routine, the matter of his being suited of no concern to her.

"The house isn't what that gabby taximan promised, and this room's not so grand and airy as that slick-lookin' pirate downstairs said it would be."

"I'm not to blame if the house is not a grand one or if the room is not larger."

"She's mad about something, whatever it is," thought Jan. He noted a touch of color in her pale cheeks as he faced her to say, very gently:

"Excuse me, Miss. You mustn't think I'm blamin' you. If it's you who takes care of this room, then I want to say you keep it nice an' clean. The whole house looks clean, even the outside of it. I noticed it on the way in. Even that pool-room below was clean. This room will suit me, Miss." He smiled at her. "It will have to, won't it, seein' I paid a week in advance on it?"

She had been standing listlessly in the doorway, replacing on her left hand the cotton glove which Jan had restored to her. She straightened up, gazed sharply at him, removed the door key from the outside to the inside. From the bunch of keys at her waist she took a larger key, laid it on the

dresser, pointed toward the hall door below and said: "Your latch-key."

She smiled a faint smile, but a smile for all that. She added, after a longer, more open glance at him: "I'm glad you like a clean room," bowed slightly and closed the door behind her.

Outside in the hallway the girl bent over the stair-rail. She was like one looking and listening for some expected happening from below. A little line between her eyes deepened as she stood there, debating just what to do next. Finally she opened the door of the room next to the new guest's and began her work of making up a bed there. She left the door ajar.

The creaking of stairs and hall boards under some one's carefully-placed feet soon became audible. The house girl stepped lightly to the door and peeked into the hall. The girl Goldie was standing outside Tingloff's door. The eyes of the two women met.

The girl Goldie, making a scornful mouth, passed on up the stairs to the floor above. The house girl went back to her bed making, leaving the door still ajar.

On her way to the top floor Goldie encountered a young man, a handsome, lithe young fellow. He

hooked one arm around Goldie's waist. "How are we this morning, girlie?"

"Sh-h—!" She pointed at the door ajar.

He expanded his leering eyes, made an O of his mouth. He smiled roguishly. "She there?" he whispered.

Goldie nodded.

He loosened his grip of her. "Say, Goldie, d'y s'pose Harry would care if——"

"Harry care? Don't make me lawf! Go on, give her something besides protectin' her innercent lodgers to think of."

Jan in his room had taken off his ulster, opened up his suit case, and was at the work of distributing its contents. First, he took out four photographs: one of an elderly woman, one of a young woman, one of a small boy, and one of a group which included all three and himself. He ranged them carefully across the foot of the mirror.

Next, he laid out a thick book bearing the title "Days of Chivalry" in silver letters on a bright blue cover. He spread out his shaving gear: stick of soap, brush, mug, and a set of old-fashioned razors in a leather case with the initials J. T. in gold letters on the case.

He fished out two briar pipes and a large tin of

tobacco, which reminded him of something. He drew a rubber pouch from his pocket and filled it from the tin of tobacco. He placed his slippers under the edge of the bed, and his pajamas across the brass rail at the foot.

He hung half a dozen cravats, one after the other, over the gas pipe. Extra shirts he placed in the wide top drawer of the dresser, extra handkerchiefs and socks in the second wide drawer. There were three or four books in the suit case yet. He decided to let them stay there. He lifted out a suit of rough tweed and a light blue flannel shirt—laid them on the bed, and proceeded to get into them. He was obviously a man who did not believe in hurrying for the sake of hurrying; all these little works he performed leisurely.

He had changed into the tweed trousers and the blue flannel shirt, and was trying to tie his cravat, a task which always taxed his patience, when he became aware of some sort of commotion in the next room. He cocked up an ear, stayed poised for a moment on his toes. He shook his head, eased down off his toes and resumed the task of tying his cravat.

Again he heard a commotion, a scuffling this time, followed by a labored breathing, as if one

were exerting his last ounce of strength. Two people wrestling silently might make just such muffled sounds. He opened his room door, thrust his head into the hall. No one there. He finished drawing in the slack of the tie as he listened.

Something was going on. He stepped into the hall. He heard an almost smothered: "You beast! O, you beast!" from behind the closed door next to his. He leaped for it, threw it open.

It was the house girl and a young man. She held a boot-tree as if about to strike a blow with it. One of the young fellow's hands was clutching one of her wrists. His other arm was around her neck.

Quickly, softly, Jan stepped into the room. He seized the man from behind. The man tried to whirl on him. Jan, holding him with very little effort, said:

"What 'll I do with him, Miss?"

She was already at the wash-stand making ready to wash a smear of blood off the boot-tree. She made no answer.

"What 'll I do with him, Miss?"

"It doesn't matter much what you do with him." Without looking up from the wash-stand, she added wearily: "After him there will be others."

With eased grip, Jan faced the man around.



There was blood on his cheek, his lip was cut—where the boot-tree must have hit him, Jan decided. He released his grip, motioned him to get along. To make sure that he got along he followed him into the hall. The young fellow retreated down the stairs. Half-way down he shouted back furiously:

“Somebody will pay for this!”

“That’s all right.” Jan gazed curiously down upon him, as if he were some strange sail. “That’s all right. I’ll pay for it. Any time. Come back and collect your pay now, if you want.”

The man disappeared into the regions below. Jan glanced toward the room where he had left the house girl. “They send good men to war to shoot other good men, and leave beasts like him floatin’ around loose,” he muttered.

He wanted to go in and comfort her; but women were never much in his line, especially strange women. He stepped into his own room and, leaving his door open, put on his vest and coat. He left the door open in case the man might want to come back and see him further. He waited five minutes by his watch. Nobody came.

His watch reminded him that it was near lunch time, and that he was due to see his vessel before

lunch. He threw his ulster over his arm, locked his door and was descending the stairs, when the house girl appeared in the door of the other room. He had not heard her, she stepped so lightly. He first knew she was there when he heard a voice calling timidly:

“O, Captain!”

He looked up through the open stair rail. “Yes, Miss?” He lifted the front brim of his hard hat.

“I heard them call you Captain downstairs.” She said it as if apologizing for her boldness. “Thank you, Captain, for helping me.” She was drying the boot-tree on a towel.

“It was very little help for me to give, Miss. No risk for me. If he was a fighting kind—maybe. But him! You want to try and forget him now. He’s the kind that most men tryin’ to be half-way decent have to stand for. Forget him, Miss.”

“If he were only the first, perhaps I could forget. Or if I could believe he would be the last.”

Jan had a notion that she did not mean that for him to hear; but he was growing bolder. “Don’t let ’em worry you. If any of ’em do worry you again, just pass the word to me. While I’m here, anyway. I’d like it for a steady job kickin’ his kind the len’th of the deck and overboard. Don’t

let 'em bother you. I got to go now. Got a gang o' men overhaulin' a vessel o' mine, and I got to get down to see how they're gettin' on." He lifted his hat brim politely, and made for the hall door.

The girl lingered at the stair rail to watch him pass out. She heard a man's steps hurrying up from the basement back stairs. She knew the step for Goles's, and leaned far over the stair rail to see better. Above her she heard the girl Goldie say: "Hell'll be poppin' soon," but she paid no attention to her, not even when she came to the foot of the top flight of stairs and said:

"You let yourself in for somethin' that time, Lena."

Jan was about to pass out by the front door when Goles popped up from below:

"Captain Tingloff!"

"Yes?" Jan closed the front door and faced Goles.

"See here, Captain, you and I might as well have an understanding right now. Whatever a lodger does in this house is his business and mine."

"You talkin' about that swab I just chased below?"

"I'm talking about anybody and everybody who lodges in this house."

"But do you know what he tried to do upstairs?"

"What did he do? Did he hurt you?"

"Hurt me? Him! His kind don't bother full-grown men. He tried to hurt that young woman who takes care of your rooms here. Too bad she didn't have an axe handy 'stead o' that little bit o' light wood."

"What did he do to her?"

"Nothin'. He got stopped, but if he tried the same thing on any young woman I had any claim to, d'y' know what I'd done? I'd broke his neck if I had to. If I didn't have to, I'd hove him down those stairs an' through this front door and as far out into the street as I could 've hove him, then kicked him down the middle o' the street."

"Never mind about that young woman. Looking after her is my business, not yours."

"Too bad you don't 'tend to that business then."

"Yes?" Goles's sneering face was too much.

"Why, you—you—" Whenever Jan got real mad he became inarticulate; which made him madder. "You—you—" He threw his ulster on the newel post and stepped toward Goles.

"Don't you lay hands on me! Don't you—" The angry aspect of the previously placid sailor scared Goles. He retreated toward the back stairs.

"Hands on you! I ought to be kickin' you like a dog! Scat, you——"

Goles scatted down the basement stairs. Jan grabbed up his ulster, opened the front door and slammed it behind him with a terrific bang.

"You—you——" Goles had returned to the hallway and was pounding the closed front door. He gave over the pounding to rush upstairs. The house girl had not moved. She made no attempt to move now.

He gripped her by the throat, backed her against the wall. "See here, my lady! When men pay good room rent and spend money downstairs besides, don't you get fresh with them. Don't you go sicking other men onto them, either."

She uttered no protest, merely raised her hands to loosen his grip. Her upraised left hand brought the gold ring on her third finger into view. She held the ring finger of that hand up to him: "Does that mean anything to you? What am I, your wife or your slave?"

"What are you?" He let go of her throat to clutch her hand. He seized the finger and wrenched off the wedding ring. Shreds of skin came with it. He held up the ring, rolled it around on a level with her eyes, shrieking out:

"See it? You do? You'll never see it again! And I guess that will end that wife stuff for you." He put the ring in his vest pocket, and backed to the head of the stairs.

She stared dully at her ring finger. She put the finger to her lips, sucked the blood that was beginning to show.

"Go on! Get to work!" He had halted at the head of the stairs. "I can't be hiring a woman to help you. Go on, I say!"

She made no move, nor proffered any answering word, merely held her bleeding finger to her lips and stared dumbly at him above her hand.

He rushed toward her. "I told you to go to work, didn't I? Then, go, damn you, go!" He tore her hand from her lips, bumped the back of her head against the wall. "Are you going?"

"I'm going."

She rubbed one hand several times across her forehead and shuffled into the room where she had been making up the bed. She closed the door behind her.

The girl Goldie had been holding her place at the foot of the upper stairs. There was a gleam of pity in her glance toward the closed door, a glint of aversion for him.



"Say, Harry, that tango dancer was pretty fresh to her. I expected he'd get a little fresh with her, but he tried to go the limit."

"I don't care about him. I'm showing her who's running this place. I'll do more than that. You watch me! I'll force her out of here yet. She thinks I can't, but she doesn't know me. She'll do as I want and be damned glad to do it before I get through with her."

He was about to descend the stairs. A convulsive frenzy took sudden hold of him. He whirled, ran back to the closed room door. He pounded it, shouting:

"When you finish making up that room you can cook lunch for two. What's that? I said for two. You don't want any? Who said you did? Lunch for two, I said. Lunch for me and Goldie—hear?"

He waited for the answer, flashing his teeth at Goldie while waiting. "Oh, you heard me, did you? All right, then."

"Come on downstairs, Goldie. I'll get you a little drink, and then we will have lunch in my room. Come on! I'll have her soon as she'll be ready to jump out of a top floor window to get out of here."

## II

EVERY morning, immediately after an early breakfast, Lena Goles would clean up the front and back rooms of the lodging house basement. The sweeping and scrubbing of the littered floors, the emptying and scouring of the filthy cuspidors were not heartening tasks for her day's beginning; but the work was hers to do, and she preferred to do it before the frequenters of the place would be arriving. Her stoic pride had been hardening her frame to ceaseless toil, but not to the curious or pitying stares of strange men who should see her at this repulsive business to which her husband had compelled her.

After doing the basement, it was usually time to be getting her husband's morning coffee, the same served in a certain exquisite China set and on a rare lacquered tray, the gift, so he hinted, of an admiring lady of his early brilliant days, of the days when to have to work for a living was his last thought. He took eight or ten cubes of sugar with the coffee, dropping them one at a time into the

China cup. He liked a sweet trifle with his coffee, usually a large cream puff. He took his coffee in his bedroom on the first floor, the one well furnished room in the house. It was the former rear drawing room of the house, and was fitted with old, expensive furniture, remnants of the days when well-to-do people dwelt there. Lena's room was a meagerly furnished one on the second floor front. Within a month after her marriage, so rapid was her progress to complete disillusionment, she had moved into that little hall room.

After the ceremony of her husband's morning coffee, Lena would begin the making up of the rooms of such lodgers as were up and gone. She had learned from distasteful experience to wait until they were gone. The room of the cabaret dancer—he it was who had attempted to assault her—she never went over until after lunch, he being a late riser always; the girl Goldie's room she never went near until she had seen that young person downstairs. Goldie had early warned her not to, and embarrassing disclosures had confirmed the propriety of that warning.

In the afternoon she would make the rounds to replace used towels with clean ones. One soft and one hard towel was her allowance for each lodger.

Her husband had protested fiercely from the beginning against such waste.

"Two towels a day to people who probably never had one clean towel a week in their homes!"

"But people who pay for rooms should be getting something besides a mere bed to sleep in."

"Should they? Well, they don't around here. Do you expect me to be paying for washing all those towels?"

No violent rupture had yet come between them, and she was striving bravely to adjust her inbred habits to his discouraging demands. "I am willing to wash them," she replied wearily.

"It's not the washing alone. They will wear out too fast, and I will have to be buying new ones. I am doing the managing here, remember, planning how to get a living for both of us. What money will I have left from the rents if I have to be always buying new towels and sheets, and so on? Be as tidy and clean as you please, but don't ever expect me to pay the expense."

The house was hers, not his; but from the beginning it was he who took the rents from it. She did not suspect him then of coldly planning to steal it from her. It was only after several months that she began to think that it might be so. The sus-

picion that he might be planning to bend her will to his was born of a yet later time.

She did have a thought, when at last her native trustfulness was compelled to take notice, of appealing to the friendly old family lawyer to force her husband to turn over to her the house rents; but it was never more than a thought. She was not ready to admit to her family what a horrible failure her marriage had been. Later, she could smile bitterly that she had ever thought the matter of house rents worth an hour's worry, but at this time of the towel quarrel, her girlish illusions had not been wrenched from her romantic soul. A pity that a little money meant more to him than a well-ordered house. Possibly, of course, she was at fault somewhere herself. She could remember, when a little girl, a saying of her father's: "None of us ever see ourselves as we really were. The man who can so see himself is drawing near to God, time almost for him to die." In the light of that saying of her father's, for whom she had a great affection, she used to think that perhaps there was some vital quality lacking in herself.

It was late afternoon of Jan Tingloff's first day in the house, and Lena was making up his room.

She had hurried through the other rooms. She always did hurry through them, distaste for the labor and need for time driving her on. She was proceeding more leisurely in the sailor's room. He had rescued her from a villainous attack; her gratitude sought to find expression in some form of service to him. The only service she could see to do was to make his room comfortable for him.

She folded back the bed coverings—a refinement not accorded to other lodgers. His pajamas lay where he had thrown them across the brass rail at the foot of the bed. She gathered them up, smoothed them, refolded them, placed them under the pillow, so that the edges of them would show and he would not have to waste time looking for them.

She closed the big suit case, which he had left open, buckled the straps, set it out of the way in the closet.

His slippers were askew under the edge of the bed. She placed them side by side, toes pointing neatly out. A razor had been left out on the dresser. Making sure that it was wiped dry and clean, she slipped it into the vacant compartment of the leather case with the gold initials. There was a razor for every day in the week, and a place



for each, all properly marked so that he could make no mistake in the order of their use.

"He never bought that for himself—he's not that kind to spend money on himself," she murmured. "Somebody else picked that, somebody who cared for him." She lingered over that tender thought, taking to herself a share in what must be the happiness of such a man in the dear gift. "A birthday gift, surely." She had noticed the date on it, and the date was not Christmas. "A birthday gift from his wife, and he gave her a nickel, perhaps a nickel for each, so that bad luck would not follow."

She sought to see what else she might do. She sat in the rocker to try it. It was not as comfortable as it might be, much too small and flimsy for so stoutly-built a man. She evoked a picture of every chair in every room in the house, seeking to recall one that might be withdrawn without stirring a clamor from its present user.

The photographs on the dresser had slipped down. She picked them up, took them over to the light of the window to see them better.

The young woman would be his wife, of course, and the child their baby boy. This other was his

mother; in the kindly features Lena could see the sure resemblance.

She set the photographs carefully back on edge against the mirror. She picked up the book, noted the title, "Days of Chivalry", in silver letters on the blue cloth cover. There was a marker in the book, an empty envelope addressed to Captain Jan Tingloff.

"Captain Jan Tingloff," she murmured. "Jan Tingloff."

She visualized him as he had stood back to her in the basement pool-room that morning: the rather short and immensely powerful frame, hair sticking out from the brim of a hat that looked to be two sizes too small for him.

His voice was rough, too, though not displeasing. His waste of time talking to the girl Goldie was what she found displeasing. A most awkward man he looked until he had taken off his heavy ulster. Broad and thick he still looked, but no longer an ill-shaped, clumsy person, and his large, rough-cast features radiated good nature. She recalled him as he had stood in the hall, hauling straight his tie, after disposing of the tango dancer: a heavy striding man, yet light enough on his feet when the need was there.

"You keep my room so nice and clean, Miss." His kindly glance, his words of praise—when had she been praised before?—compelled her notice.

"Miss?" What would he think if he knew she was the wife of the man for whom he held such contempt? What had he thought of her, the shabby, dispirited drudge, the legitimate prey of any marauding male lodger who thought to count on her feebleness, her lack of a man's protection?

She had been holding the book open at the marker. Here was where he had been reading last:

#### ADVENTURE OF THE CASTLE OF THE MAIDENS

When Sir Galahad heard this he thanked God, and took his horse; and had not ridden half a league when in a valley before him he saw a strong castle enclosed within a deep moat; and there he met an old man, and of him Galahad asked the castle's name.

"Fair sir," said the old man, "it is the Castle of the Maidens. Have ye not heard?"

"Who, indeed, has not?" responded Galahad. "The abode of evil knights, and of distressed damsels held in durance. A cursed castle, and cursed are the false knights who dwell therein; without pity, and with all hardness and mischief."

"And therefore I counsel ye, Sir Knight, that ye turn aside."

"Know ye well," retorted Sir Galahad, "that I shall not turn aside," and looked to his arms that they failed not; and put on his shield before him; and as he rode, there met him seven maidens, each fairer than the other, and they said to him:

"Sir Knight, ye ride to great peril."

"And why should not a knight ride to peril?" asked Sir Galahad, and he rode away from them, and there met him a squire, and he said:

"Sir Knight, the knights in the castle defy ye, and forbid ye to advance further until they give ye permit."

"Fair Sir," said Galahad mildly, "I come to destroy the wicked custom of this castle."

"Then have ye enough to do." And Sir Galahad rode on; and as he rode, there came out from the castle seven tall knights on black horses, and they rode toward him, and cried out:

"Beware, Knight, for all is death before ye!"

"And will ye have all to do with me at the same time?" asked Sir Galahad, and gripped his lance.

"Yea," said they with one voice—"be ye well assured of it" . . .

She raised her head to draw a freer breath; she closed her eyes, the more clearly to imagine it, and soon was re-peopling that world which her imagination was not so wont of late to create for her, bringing to life in it the men who rode far and wide to creatures in distress.

She was close to happy oblivion of the drab world about her; but freedom of spirit no more than of body was never entirely hers within the walls of that house. Her ears, trained to whatever might be going on about her, caught the click of a key in the front door.

She heard the front door open and close. A step was ascending the hard, bare stairs. Hastily she closed the book, laid it back on the dresser. It was Tingloff's step—already she knew it. She hurried through the half-open door, closed it softly, turned the key without noise.

He had reached the landing at the head of the stairs. She was, curiously, strangely averse to meeting him now. In the hope that he would not see her, she crowded her body against the hall wall. It was twilight outside and rather dark in the hall.

She saw his head turned toward her as he approached. He raised the brim of his hat, saying,

"Good evenin'." It was said in the voice of a man whose mind was elsewhere.

"Oh!" she thought. "He has forgotten me already."

His plunging step had carried him abreast of her. He pulled up sharply. "Excuse me, Miss." He whipped off his hat, and held it. "Good evenin'. I didn't know you for a minute."

"Good evening, Captain."

Her voice to herself sounded low and faint. Fearing he had not heard and would think her rude for not replying, she spoke again:

"Good evening, Captain Tingloff."

His bow assured her that he had heard, though he said no word. He stood stiff and motionless, an obviously embarrassed man trying hard to think of something to say. His eyes shone luminous through the gloom.

She recalled suddenly that it was time for her to be getting ready the evening meal for her lord and master; without further look at him she fled through the hall and down the stairs.

A furtive upward glance between the rods of the stair-rails disclosed him still standing motionless, staring at the stairs down which she was fleeing.

"He's puzzled to know why I am running away.

What an uncouth, gawky creature he must think me!" was her thought.

The kitchen in the Goles house was on the first floor back. Lena cooked her husband's evening meal and brought it to him in the basement. She had her own meal, had cleared up the kitchen and was about to put out the kitchen light, listening all the while for any sound from outside.

The habit of listening had grown on her. Through her ears, as much as by her eyes, she located the whereabouts of her lodgers. Always before leaving a room she harkened for sound of any prowlers on stairs or in hallways. By so doing she had saved herself many distressing encounters.

She now caught the patter of a step in the hall. Of the lodgers in that house only the cabaret dancer and the girl Goldie could step so lightly. It could not be the dancing man: at this hour he would be performing at the Maritime Hotel for his meals and wages. It would be Goldie, and why should she be stepping around so lightly? It was another curse of the place that she had developed the habit, where Goldie and her husband were concerned, of striving to interpret the meaning of their every move.



Her habit of suspecting motives was a precautionary as well as defensive measure. She admitted to herself that she was becoming no better than a spy, an eavesdropper at times: but even so, what would she have become among them if she had not cast off many of her native, trusting ways? It was a battle for more than her meals and room; she would continue to spy, if need be.

She envisaged the allure, the undisguised appeal of the girl while talking to Tingloff in the pool-room that morning; and there was her later attempt to catch him alone in his room. What was her game now?

Lena drew back the hand that she had extended to turn off the gas jet. Though the kitchen door was closed, the shaft of light under the sill would be Goldie's assurance that she was still busily at work. She rattled a tin dish to strengthen the assurance and, allowing time for the pattering feet to make the stairs to the next floor, she crept from the kitchen into the first-floor hall. Through the open rail as she slipped up the stairs she could see the street girl on the second floor landing. By the half-light in the hall she could see her stepping like a cat toward Captain Tingloff's room door.

Goldie had cocked an ear toward the door, raised

her closed hand, and was about to knock, when Lena seized her wrist from behind.

Goldie whirled and gave battle. It was a noiseless struggle. The street girl was taller and heavier. On outer form, in this physical contest, she should have prevailed; but her body was soft, her wind scant. Also morals and morale lie not far apart: the indignant and determined Lena forced Goldie back to the head of the stairs.

"Haven't you any shame—no thought ever of what a decent man may think of you?"

"What's rasping you, anyways? If there's men c'n go 'round grabbin' off girls, why can't there be girls grabbin' off men?"

Lena's voice had been low, suppressed, intense. Goldie's voice was less restrained. Lena pushed her hand roughly against the girl's lips: "Hush! Don't raise your voice here now!"

Goldie could never understand the other's point of view in these things. She knew that Lena had allowed her husband to take over the profits of the rooms without a murmur out of her; that she was doing the work of two maids in this big house with never a complaint; yet here she was now starting a fight like a mad dog over nothing at all! What could anybody do with a woman like that?

When Lena boiled over Goldie feared her. She now backed down the stairs before the fury of her threat. She continued her descent to the basement, where she hurried to find Goles.

He was sitting behind the counter in the pool-room, seemingly absorbed in the doings of his customers, though actually reflecting on a plan for increased profit from his business. He had only that afternoon met a wealthy purveyor of pleasure whom he was proud to know. From out of his great experience and wisdom the famous one had said to him: "Get the spare change of any fifty people, Harry—any kind of people—and there's a living right there for you. Make it a hundred people, and there's a damn good living. A thousand! A thousand . . ." It was a thrilling prospect he outlined.

"Ss-t, Harry!"

"Uh-h!" Goles came out of his dream, to see Goldie's glittering features shining on him. He followed her beckoning finger through the dim basement hall to the back room.

A famous place in the neighborhood, that back room. Access could be had to it by anybody during the day; but not at night. The connecting door to the pool-room was then kept locked. The only

entrance then was by way of a side door from the alley. It was by way of the alley door that women of the street steered drunken sailors and other promising cargoes. In this back room, the front street door being locked and the premises apparently shut for the night, Goles would take from the wise young men of the neighborhood what spare cash they had to chance at cards. Here it was he served "safe" customers the hard liquor which he had no legal license to sell; here he served the initiate with the drugs which no license, city or otherwise, would ever have empowered him to sell.

It being yet too early in the evening for good business, Goldie and Goles had their choice of empty booths. Rapidly, in one of these booths, with graphic and mostly unprintable phrases, she told him of the clash upstairs.

"A fat chance I got to hook him with her standin' 'round night an' mornin'," was her breathless conclusion to the tale of the battle upstairs.

Goles had shared the indignation of her opening sentences. Before she ended her story his frown had left him. He smiled. It was not his tooth-flashing, wide open smile that he usually kept on tap. It was a smile of close-set lips and brooding study of the street girl.

"Look here, Kid! Is she falling for him herself, do you think?"

"D'y' mean—? Well, say!"

Goldie had no limits of conduct in several directions, but she was hardly twenty years old; and not every saving grace, not every natural instinct was yet destroyed in her.

"Jeepers, Harry, but bein' your wife must be encouragin' to a girl!"

"Never mind about being my wife. You might be that some day. But when you are, it will be because I want you to be, not because I think your folks have a bank roll. And why couldn't you be?"

He paused: she seemed to be taking the bait. From his vest pocket he produced his wife's wedding ring. He held it up:

She affected a tremendous yawn. "Thanks, but I ain't yearnin' to be anybody's wife."

"Not even mine?"

His smirk was as coldly professional as any she had ever herself served out to a witless patron. She grimaced, knowing him, yet deriving a slight thrill from a fugitive thought. In remorseful moments she had entertained dreams of some day settling down with one man; of marrying him, perhaps. Not every day that was, she having sense

usually to realize that the man who married her, without suspicion of what she was, would be too young or too innocent for all human purposes: and if it wasn't that kind, it would have to be the kind that nothing matters to: some old or worn-out debauchee; and she was not yet so far gone as to welcome that prospect.

Goles had taken her hand and was, absent-mindedly, as it were, slipping the wedding ring on and off the tip of her finger. But she knew it for no absent-mindedness. Curious to hear what he had in mind to use her for now, she waited patiently for what would come.

"I'll tell you something, Kid. Nobody else knows it. I won't be around here much longer. Not enough in it, and the police are taking too much notice of the place, especially the fly cops. It's going to be a new address for me before long. No rush. I'll take time to clean up a few things before I go. And when I go, I'm taking you with me. Remember that—you're coming with me."

"Yeh? How about Lena?"

"To hell with Lena! I've told you already, haven't I, what I think of her? I have a cash customer for this house right now. Listen."

Goldie listened, knowing very well that if he

was telling the truth, it was because the truth would pay him better. She believed he was lying now, yet her interest was stirred; she was conscious of a flutter within her. After all, he *was* good looking, and when not in one of his insane moods for money or to see that no one got the best of him, he could be very pleasant. At his best, he was the most splendid male creature she had ever spent more than a passing hour with. Her choice in men, it is true, had to be exercised in a little world, but within that world Harry Goles passed for a great prize—an educated, well-dressed, handsome man.

Even a drab girl of the streets may have her fair dreams, and Goldie was not hopelessly drab. She was still young and pretty, still within the fancy of young and good-looking men: why shouldn't she nurse her hopes? There were odder happenings in life than Goles honestly falling in love with her.

Goles was talking. She knew—the dilated pupils of his eyes betrayed it to her—that his favorite drug was working in him. With that drug to inspire him he would plan, and sometimes execute, great strokes. In that mood, even when nobody listened, he would run on like an open



faucet without a word being said to him until the sure reaction set in. Flat and flabby, dull and listless, he would go then.

A bell rang. Goles ceased to talk, went to the alley door, called out a word, waited. A word answered through the door; he opened it, and a young girl entered with a man in tow. She installed him in a booth, whispered to Goles.

Said Goles: "Coke or——"

"Coke. A two-dollar deck."

"Well, where's the money?"

"My friend hasn't loosened up yet, but he will. We'll stay here to-night. I'll fix up with you before I go—aw right?"

"All right, but don't you forget."

He disappeared into the dark hall, came back, handed the girl a paper packet. She went back to her man. "Don't slip up," he called after her, and made an entry in a pocket account book.

"Know the trouble with Mae?" Goles had resumed his seat with Goldie again. "She becomes too interested in the men she picks up. I've told her what I've told you more than once—to cut that out of her life. Business and pleasure—you can't mix 'em."

"Say, Harry, how'd you ever hypnertize Lena into marryin' you?"

"Hyptonize? Am I such a fright to look at?"

"Oh, lay off on your looks! Everybody knows you're beeyootiful. How'd you hook her?"

"Hook her? You're too damn fresh!"

"Aw, come on, Harry! You promised me one day you'd tell me how you grabbed her off from a lot o' folks who didn't want you to marry her. You must 'a' been pretty slick at that, she comin' from the kind o' people I heard you one time say she did."

This usually stupid girl understood men better than any other subject in the world—men, that is, of his world and hers. She knew that his estimate of his own shrewdness was colossal.

"I was pretty clever, if I do say it."

"I'll bet you was, but how'd you come to get acquainted, how'd you break in? Where'd she come from?"

"She comes from a little town a few miles the other side of Port Rock, though to watch her up-stage manner sometimes, you might think she was brought up in a palace. I wouldn't have stayed in the town over night only that there was something in it for me. There were a dozen families in the

place, hers among them, who didn't know that any of the others were alive—except when they wanted to get something out of them. I guess you know the kind."

"I know. I know! Selling tickets for an oyster stew party or a church sociable, and a pleasant word when they're takin' up your ticket at the door, and for a day or two after, maybe. Later, it's—'How d'y' do,' with a frozen jaw and a glass eye. Wickedness of the city! Bunk! I can tell you somethin' about life in those country villages, Harry."

"You think you can! But you can't. I was born in one of 'em. Well, I had stopped over on the way back from Canada to see a druggist that had the handling of a certain business in that part of the state."

"What kind o' business, Harry?" She grinned slyly, maliciously. "Dope?"

"Shut up! If you can't shut up, don't talk so loud. You'll be talking sometime and the wrong person will hear you. Everybody in the town came to this drug store for their hot weather drinks, so I hung out there to get acquainted."

"How you must 'a' rested their eyes, Harry,

you the swell city guy all dressed up, or were you a swell dresser then like you are now?"

"You think I dress now? You should have seen me in the days when I did dress! However, it's summer time, and all the girls in the town come to this drug store for their hot weather drinks, this girl among them, and I spot her, and pretty soon she doesn't have to be told that your friend Harry is among the young men present. There was an old hen of an aunt. You know the kind——"

"'Leen-ah! Leen-ah! We'll be going now, Leen-ah!' That her?"

"About like that. But I got in a few words with the girl, just the same. And you know, Kid, I know how to play a girl. A girl can start out by hating a man, and wind up by going crazy about him. And when it's a man she has no reason to hate!—why, nothing to it. There's no girl who ever lived that won't listen to the things that she likes to hear. She can be thinking to herself: 'He's lying, he's lying, I know he's lying,' and be falling for every pretty word he says even while she is thinking it."

"The poor simp! And she fell for your line o' bunk?"

"What do you know of my line of bunk? You

think I pass out the same line to everybody? The line of talk I gave her would sound like a strange language to you."

"Oh, would it?"

"It would. She used to read romances. She believed the world was full of heroes."

"Livin' with you since must've knocked that belief in heroes out of her, Harry. What about that old hen of an aunt?"

"Oh, the aunt. The druggist told me there was money in the family, but he doesn't tell me that her folks being dead, her aunt is her trustee under her father's will except for a piece of property in Boston, this same house we're in now."

"But ain't she of age?"

"She is now."

"And can you have a trustee——?"

"For as long as the will says—why, certainly. I play up to the aunt. She was strong for respectability and being important in the world. And what I gave her was about my bright college days and my well-to-do people in Boston!"

"I didn't know you had folks in Boston."

"I haven't, but it's as easy to say Boston as Hartford or Syracuse or Harrisburg, and sounds better. I was going good with the aunt only for a

suspicious old country lawyer, who'd drawn up her father's will in the first place. If I had a fair chance at him, I'd have choked him. This lawyer—Walker's his name—happens along and meets me with Lena. Before I can guess it he runs up to Boston on the quiet, where, I guess, he learns a few things, and when he gets back he goes into conference with the aunt, and the aunt all but locks Lena up in her room. She must stay away from me, says the aunt to Lena."

"What did you do then?"

"While Walker's in Boston, I'm working double shifts with the girl. The aunt is too stiff-necked to explain to Lena. She's the kind who thinks a girl ought to obey without asking questions, leave it to her aunt's superior wisdom, and so on, she forgetting she'd never done anything in her whole life to show she had more wisdom than anybody else—as I point out to Lena, who begins to sulk, as I knew she would. The aunt puts the screws on tighter, as I knew she would, and——"

"Too tight or too loose, always one or the other, ain't it, Harry? Either way it's bad for a girl, ain't it? Too loose with me and too tight with her kind, and there's her upstairs darnin' socks an' here's me down here listenin' to her husband an'

drinkin'— But I ain't drinkin'. How about a little highball, Harry?"

"Sure. Wait."

He returned with a highball. The girl sipped it with gusto. "Lena sulks, and then what, Harry?"

"The aunt locks her up, which leaves nothing for me, the young hero, to do except to steal her away like in the romances she's been reading. And we get married."

"Truly married?"

"We were married all right. She wouldn't stand for anything less. Besides, where was I coming in if I didn't marry her? After we were married I questioned her and learned that she wouldn't get a dollar until she's twenty-five. It was Walker who talked her aunt into letting her have this house so that she would have some money of her own coming in. I thought she'd make it over to me when she got it. And she would, too, only Walker made her promise she wouldn't. And she didn't. She'd given her promise! I tried to talk her out of it, but stubborn! You wouldn't believe, nobody would, how stubborn she is. That's the aunt in her."

"Oi! Oi!—married and stung!"

"Oh, not stung so badly. I have my right of



curtesy, as the court calls it, in the real estate that her aunt holds in trust, unless I die before her, and I'll take good care that don't happen to me, and right now I get the rents from this whole house without paying out a copper for help on it. There's a living in the rents alone, and there's what the pool-room end of it brings in."

"The pool-room and a few other little items like——"

"Cut that!"

"What's your rush to leave here if you're doin' so well?"

"I'll tell you. Listen. Your little finger, Girlie, is worth all of her to me—you know that. There's a new night cop on this beat, and it's no accident he's been put on. He's a pretty slick party, but Harry Goles is pretty slick, too. If he's watching me, I've been watching him, too. I won't be leaving to-morrow, or next day, or the day after; but it won't be long now. And I'd like to make a clean-up before I go."

"What d'y' call a clean-up?"

"There are two or three things. Take this big simp of a coaster captain who carries so much loose cash around with him, and what he might be coaxed to draw out of the bank. Then if I can get

that wife of mine to deed this house over to me, I know a man who will buy it from me at a good price."

"What a fool she'd be!"

"Oh-h, she might. Listen. You say you think she is getting stuck on Tingloff. I can—we can—hook 'em, if we—you know—use the right bait. If I could only get something on her, she might be glad to deed me the house, and— Listen!"

"My ear is worn out with listenin'. How about another little drink while I'm listenin'?"

"You'll drink yourself to death some day."

"Not with you for a barkeep, I won't."

Having assured herself that Goldie had abandoned for the moment her hunt of the sailor, Lena Goles went to her room. She would have enjoyed going out, enjoyed in these drear times even more than ever she did at home, to take in a play or a concert, to put in a social evening with pleasant people. But such delights for her were all in the past. She had no one to go with anywhere of an evening. Except such people as her husband had acquainted her with she knew no one in Boston, and such were not the kind she cared to see again.

She would have gone alone, now and then, to

almost any kind of decent entertainment of an evening, if only she had the money to pay her way. Her husband would sometimes offer her a dollar; but offering it in such a manner, as if it pained him, as if it were his money and not her own he was handing over! Now and then she would accept. She had to, or be reduced to the humiliation of writing home for money for her absolute woman's necessities. She could appeal, of course, to Mr. Walker, to compel her husband to turn over to her the rents of the house, but she had defied the lawyer on her husband's account, and she was not yet reduced to confessing, even to the kindly old lawyer, what a misery her marriage had become. Also it was not in her tribal nature to have a pitched battle with a husband. She had in her the stuff to make a martyr of herself in some great cause, but not in her own cause: Nature never intended her for a rebellious wife.

Lena was what is so often termed an old-fashioned woman. She had been ready to be all that Mother Nature intended a good wife to be to a husband, expecting him to be a full man on his side. She had accepted it as a misfortune for which there was no remedy. The men of Lena's ancestral world had their faults: too often they

held their women to a narrow housewifely existence, but they did have some compensating virtues. They were wholesome and protective. They were not given to show or pretense. The theatrical pose was beyond them.

Harry Goles, when he came awooing of her, seemed a bright, scintillating being beside the young men of Lena's village—such was the intensity of her romantic illusions in those foolish days.

To learn to value properly the worth of her own native kind of male, she probably needed to live for a time with the Goles kind. So, at least, it seemed to her in these later days when, as now, she was by herself and had time to think.

These evenings in her room were not given over to reminiscent thought entirely. It was her habit of evenings to get out things that needed looking over. Sometimes it would be the rehabilitation of thread-worn towels and bed sheets; sometimes of her own wearing apparel. This night she got out her velvet coat and skirt, the same coat and skirt that she wore when she ran away to be married, and it was still her best suit.

When she first began to comprehend what a consuming passion was her husband's avarice, she would wonder what she would do for new clothes

when her old wore out: at first, but not now. She learned to do without new clothes.

She had liked pretty things to wear, and she would like to wear pretty things now, if only there were somebody to please by wearing them. But who was there to please? Not her husband. He had made it plain that he did not care what she wore. "What you got suits me. Who are you getting new clothes for, anyway?" he had asked.

And such joy as she used to take in pretty things! She had taken joy in so many things which her aunt did not approve! Her fancy notions, her aunt had said, would get her in trouble some day.

Her aunt might have had the right of it. No doubt many of the rules she had laid down for Lena's guidance were the outcome of her greater knowledge of the world. But how was she to know, when her aunt merely ordered: Do this, and Don't do that, without ever giving her a reason, the same aunt who was so fond of telling her not to allow her foolish fancies to run away with her, to be guided by her reason, and not by her heart, in life.

She had envisaged her aunt, kind enough in deed if not always in words—until her will was crossed—scolding her for continuing to see Goles. Her

parting words: "You marry that man and you will have to stay with him. Don't come back on your knees to me before the year is out."

Her aunt and Lawyer Walker had judged him aright from the first. What a fool she had been! For a passion which might have been stirred in her by any good-looking young fellow in that repressed environment she had fought her aunt, who, at least, had never meant her evil.

She recalled that first visit to the lodging house so soon after they were married, when her husband had so summarily discharged the old caretaker with the daughter and the grandchildren. He had contemplated without pity their possible misery; he had brutally set aside her own desire to aid them. It was her house, not his, and from the shelter of that roof he had ordered them out. She had cast out her own aunt and substituted a husband who had made a slave of her. A husband? A slavedriver, who within one week of their marriage was reducing her to the level of a beast of the field.

That was only a year ago. Knowledge came quickly, once the seed of her doubt took root. She was wiser now, though getting small joy of her wisdom.

She had left her door ajar so that she could view the hallway to the head of the stairs from below.

Captain Tingloff! Jan Tingloff! Jan! She ceased to ply her needle, wondering what he was doing at the moment. Not a sound from his room since he had gone in there! What a quiet man! What could he find to do all this time?

She heard steps on the stairs from below. The girl called Mae had appeared on the landing with a man in tow. Lena had seen her before.

"This is my husband," said Mae. "Mr. Goles says we're to have a room, and no talk about it."

Here was the thing, she feared, would yet soil her soul beyond hope of cleansing. If ever she confessed defeat and returned abjectly to her home, it would be on account of this iniquitous trade to which that incurably evil man would make her a partner.

"Did he say what room?"

"A good room—the best you got left."

In utter scorn for herself, she showed them to a room.

Jan Tingloff was sitting in his rocker under the gas light, reading. "The Days of Chivalry" was



finished, and he had drawn another volume out of his vast suit case. "Poems of Chivalry" this was marked, in the same sort of silver letters on the same bright blue cover.

He had filled his pipe and tackled the long and stirring things about Count Roland. His pipe went out and he relighted it; was smoked out and re-filled; but breathlessly onward, no matter how the pipe fared, rode Tingloff with the valorous Count. Three pipefuls, three furious pipefuls when they were not entirely neglected pipefuls, were expended on the superhuman Roland.

"What a man!" mused Jan, and turned back the pages to read again:

Count Roland rideth the battle through,  
With Durindana, to cleave and hew——

He began to count on his fingers how many of the enemy he had killed in fair fight; but the slain men piled up so rapidly that his fingers gave out.

"He must have put away about sixty of 'em in that one fight with that sword of his," mused Jan.

He laid down the book to have a thought of his own little battle with the evil-looking lodger that day. Not a real battle that; not even what a man

would call half a fight. There couldn't be a fight, of course, where the other wouldn't fight. A child for strength, the poor creature was. He could have hove him through the window or downstairs and hardly bent his back doing it.

He forgot his own part in the thought of the girl's terror—her terror but also her bravery as she struggled with the evil lodger. He meditated on her shy words of thanks. "She was bashful as I was. A nice girl! A mistake, when I didn't heave him downstairs," muttered Jan.

He picked up his fat book of poems. Here was one that started off in a most stirring way:

Oh, young Lochinvar has come out of the West,  
Through all the wide border his steed was the  
best——

He read that one straight through; and then read it all over again. He liked the swing of it, the way it was told, even more than the story. He felt a little touch of pity for the husband. After all, the husband could hardly be blamed if he wasn't handsome and gallant. Of course though, he shouldn't have hoped to win a young and beautiful bride and she in love with a man more like herself. Of course not!

There was an illustration went with it: The bold Lochinvar just about to hoist the unwilling bride, who was willing enough now, to his saddle.

"Easy enough, once he got her—he havin' the fastest horse in the county," he mused. "But nowadays a horse wouldn't help much. No, no! Motor cars, motor cops, telegraph and telephone—they'd soon overhaul him and head him off!" Which thought sent Jan's imagination off on an interesting cruise: How could a man run off with a woman these days and not be hauled back and hove into jail for it?

He finally decided that the only way would be to swing her aboard a vessel and put to sea.

He heard steps in the hall—soft steps. Her steps, of course. Whose else? That Brown girl—Goldie Brown, was that her name?—would be heavier on her feet.

What would she be doing in the hall now? He caught a sound as of the setting down of chair legs in the hall; it was done softly enough, but his ears were keen. He remembered now seeing a little wooden cricket of a stool in a corner of the hall: a thick-planked, low cricket, with four thick, stumpy legs sticking out from the corners of it. They made him think of the four matches he used to

stick into the four corners of a potato for his boy at home. He used to take an egg-shaped potato, stick a match into each corner and set him up—a grunting, fat pig for the boy. He used to rig up big pigs and little pigs, slim ones with long legs and fat ones with short legs, stubby, slow sailing ones and tall sparred fast ones—whole fleets of pigs, and set them sailing to market, while the boy would almost choke himself with glee.

He had guessed that the little cricket was hers, had been wondering what she used it for, and now understood: the gas jets were high, she had to have help to reach up to them.

She would now be turning down the hall lights for the night. He listened, and heard her descending the stairs. Presently he heard her re-ascending. She re-passed his door and went on to the front end of the hall. He heard a door open and close. Her room must be there.

Again in his mind's eye he saw her now as he had seen her just before dark this evening: slim, timid, crowding against the wall to let him pass.

“What’s a girl like her doin’ here?” he asked himself, having in mind her figure when she straightened up from the weight of the suit case, her hand showing slim and white when the working

glove came off. Her voice and speech, too, were those of a girl who came of good people.

He gave it up. Life was full of puzzles anyway. He looked at his watch. Zow—10.50!

He laid down the "Poems of Chivalry", set his alarm clock for 6.30, placed it on the wash stand where he could reach it from his bed, pulled down the upper half of the window as low as it would go, rested both arms on top of it and had his bedtime lookout.

The noise of voices floated up from the pool-room, but they were not so loud as to be bothersome. What mattered a little noise anyway? He never had any trouble getting to sleep.

He looked up to the sky. All clear there; what small clouds he could see were drifting along before a northwest wind. The barometer had been medium high all day, indicating a fine clear day tomorrow, for which he gave thanks. The work on his vessel should go forward briskly.

He drew in his head, stood before the dresser. He picked up the photographs before the mirror, studied them, sighed, set them back in place. He put out the gas, slacked away on his suspenders, bent over to unlace his shoes. And almost imme-

diately sat up. What was getting to be the matter with him?

He hadn't seen Jack Hoey in two years almost. And here he'd been in Boston all one day and he hadn't looked him up. And Jack married, too. He was glad on Jack's account that he was married.

He would look Jack up to-morrow. He slid into bed, stretched himself under the clothes, and meditating on what kind of a wife Jack had, he fell asleep.

### III

AT quarter-past six the tiny alarm clock on the chair beside Lena Goles's bed began to tinkle. She came immediately awake, sat slowly up, peered under the window shade. A cold morning, by the look of the hurrying people in the street.

She would have liked to lie longer in bed, but her mornings abed were in the past. She arose and dressed.

Her first duty of the day was to put out the hall lights. She had put out the top floor light, had descended to the second floor, and was turning off the light there, when she heard the ringing of an alarm clock.

It was from Captain Tingloff's room, and it ceased almost instantly. Her fanciful mind seized upon the sound. She smiled faintly. The big, strong man had been roused out of a deep sleep—he looked like one who always slept well. He had reached out, seized the clock, shoved it under his pillow. She guessed this because she had found the clock under his pillow while making up his bed



the day before, and it was like him to hurry to smother the noise of it before it could disturb any neighboring roomer. This was the second morning after his coming to the house.

A loose razor on the dresser, paper smeared with dry lather in the waste basket, had informed her that he shaved himself before going out mornings—shaved with cold water. It had to be cold water. Only in the kitchen was hot water to be had, and he could have paid no early morning visit there and she not know of it.

It must be disagreeable, she thought, to have to shave with cold water. So vigorous a man must have a stiff beard. Stirring up a lather in cold water on a cool autumn morning must be slow and laborious work. She could at least be making his shaving easier for him.

Hurrying down to the kitchen, she heated a tiny pitcher of hot water over the gas stove, raced upstairs with it, set it outside his door and knocked. An unaccountable tremor then seizing her, she scurried to her own room, closing the door softly behind her. She listened, her breath quickening, as to some exciting happening to come.

She heard his door open. An interval of silence followed. She pictured his peering up and down

the still darksome hallway, wondering who had knocked, and why.

She heard his door close. He had found it! Seeing no one in the dark hall, he had looked down and discovered the little pitcher of hot water. He had stared at it, no doubt, wondering who it could be that put it there. He had smiled then and taken it in.

She waited until certain his door would not open again. She stole out then, through the hall, past his door and down the stairs to the kitchen.

It was in the kitchen she had her meals. There had been a dining room once, but her lord and master had decided such to be not only an unnecessary luxury, but also one room less to rent.

She was no sturdy, muscular figure of a girl; neither was she any weakling. Her appetite was good. At home she had always had a substantial breakfast, and such had been her breakfasts after marriage, until her husband had begun to make comment on her gross appetite.

“Why do you burden your stomach with all that stuff? You never see me eating any heavy breakfast, do you? Too much food poisons people’s systems—don’t you know that?”

She had argued the matter with him, having no

suspicion that it was not her welfare he had in view, until that day at table when he prefaced a long lecture with: "Ever reckon the cost of all those breakfast extras of yours in a year?"

His avarice was invincible. Thereafter she made her breakfast of a cup of coffee and a slice of toast.

Goles was no lie-a-bed-all-morning sort. Unless up very late the night before, he was a moderately early riser; but whether he was early or late, she had her orders not to keep him waiting for his morning coffee. And so now she prepared his coffee with her own. On the rare mornings when he slept late she would make fresh coffee for him. That half pot of coffee that had to be thrown away when he arose late was the one wasteful item of his household budget.

The coffee was still simmering on the stove when she happened to think of the light in the hall outside. Her tremor of excitement after leaving the hot water for the coaster captain had caused her to forget the first floor light. She went out now to attend to it, and being unable to reach the gas jet without her little cricket, she started upstairs to get it, and met Tingloff coming down. He was tiptoeing laboriously down the stairs, striving not to

disturb any sleeping roomers. She retreated to the foot of the stairs, and there stood aside to allow him to pass out.

"Good mornin', Miss!" He had halted and was lifting the peak of that terrible looking hard hat.

"Good morning, Captain!"

It was plainly a good morning with him, eyes clear and bright, fresh-shaved face, skin glowing with abounding vitality.

His lips parted as if to say something else, but he did not speak.

"He is wondering why I am standing here at this time of morning?" she thought, and recalling the lighted jet, she stood up on her toes, and stretched her arms to turn it off. He glanced up at what she was striving to reach. "That light? Let me." He turned it off.

"Thank you, Captain."

"And thank you for putting that hot water outside my door."

She made no answer.

"You oughtn't to run away, though, as if you were frightened of me, without giving me a chance to thank you."

He was now standing beside her. She would

have to say something. "What made you think I ran away?"

"I got good ears." He raised his head, shot a quick look down the hall: "There's somebody movin' in that room there right now, like he was listenin' at the door." It was her husband's room he indicated.

"How did you know I liked hot water to shave?"

"Don't all men?"

"Of course. But I could 've shaved in cold. I do often away from home."

"But it can't be pleasant in a chilly room on a cold morning."

"It ain't. Hot water is nicer, and what made it a lot nicer was your thinkin' of it."

He was obviously waiting for an answer. Getting none, he said: "Guess I better be gettin' along." Slowly he opened the front door. A gust of cold wind entered.

She shivered. He quickly closed the door. "See here, Miss, you oughtn't to be goin' round in such thin clothes this time o' year. And why do you get up so early?"

"I have to get breakfast for— O, Captain, wouldn't you like a cup of hot coffee before going out?"

“Hot coffee? I cert’nly would.”

She led the way to the kitchen. As they passed the door of Goles’s room, it opened the least bit, and the face of Goles peered through the crack. Hearing the faint creak of the door behind him, Jan half turned to see what it meant. The face of Goles was withdrawn.

Jan’s keen eyes ranged the kitchen. He saw a gas stove, a hot water tank, a sink, a closet door, a plain pine table and chair to match. Everything was clean, but it was all so bare! Not even an oil cloth covering the floor.

A coffee pot stood on the gas range. Two cups and saucers, a plate with cubes of sugar, another plate with a slice of toast, a shining tray, were on the table. Jan held himself no expert in such things, but he could see that one cup and saucer and the plate with the sugar cubes were of very fine china ware.

Lena poured coffee into one of the cups on the tray, not the fine one, Jan noticed, and handed it to him. She got another cup from the closet and poured coffee for herself. She motioned him to the lone chair. He shook his head vigorously.

"No, no. You take it, Miss." She bowed her acknowledgments and sat down.

"Toast, Captain?" She pushed the plate toward him. He as gently pushed it back. "No toast. This coffee is fine just as it is."

"I'm afraid, Captain, that you won't take the toast because you think there will be none for me. It is no trouble to make more toast." She started to rise.

"No, no, no! You mustn't. I'll have to be goin' soon. You mustn't. Sit down, please." She sat down.

He drank his coffee, striving to overcome an almost uncontrollable desire to be staring at her. She sipped her coffee slowly, her eyes downcast.

"You ought to eat that toast, Miss."

"Ought I? I will, then—part of it." She broke it in two, left one part on the plate, the larger part, he noted, pushed the plate to his side of the table. Smiling faintly she said, "Eat your part now, Captain."

She looked at him for the first time fairly. "What a different girl," he thought, was she now from the girl who had shown him his room on the previous day: No trace of the sullenness now, though she was serious enough. Full morning



light by now was streaming through the kitchen window, and a little up and down crease above the nose gave her the semblance of a child trying to solve some queer puzzle. Amazingly young and innocent she looked, with lips which quivered when she smiled.

He broke off a bit of the toast without attempting to eat it. She was so well-mannered, so friendly without being familiar; and there was that other so different a one, the Brown girl, under the same roof!

Her hands were bare—no cotton gloves to hide them. He could not help noticing, while they held her cup before her, that while they showed marks of toil, they were not the hands of a woman brought up to rough housework. What was such a girl doing among such people?

“Excuse me, Miss, but a girl like you oughtn’t to be in a place like this.” He hadn’t meant to say just that, but he was always blurting things out—what a blundering one she would think him!—before he had fully thought out just what he should say.

She set down her cup so quickly as almost to break it. She gave him an almost frightened look, cast a flickering glance down at her hands, and at

once folded them together, crushing the left within the right. She stood up, stepped over to the sink, opened the hot water tap into a dish basin.

He waited for the noise of the running water to cease.

"What's your name, Miss, please?"

"My name?" She hunted for a match on a shelf above the sink, found one, lit it, touched it to a gas spray on the heater.

"My name? Lena Goles."

"Goles? That man Goles, is he a relation of yours?"

She was carefully regulating the heater spray. "He is," she said at last.

"You poor girl," he muttered. He waited for her to turn around. She was still busy with the gas spray. Aloud he said, striving to be cheerful, "The coffee was fine, Miss. I have to go along now. Good mornin', and thank you."

When the front door closed behind him she glanced into the hall. From the doorway of his room Goles was peering toward the closed front door. He must have been peering out all the while at them. The kitchen door being open, he must have overheard their entire conversation.

She faced away from him, but she could feel her

back crawling while she waited for him to speak.

"Some breakfast there! Hear me? Coffee. Fresh-made coffee—no leavings."

She made fresh coffee and poured it into the exquisite china cup that the coaster captain had noticed. She added cubes of sugar to those still on the plate. From a white enameled box she took a cream puff, set it on the plate, assembled all on the pretty lacquered tray, and took them into his room.

A mahogany center table was one of the items of faded splendor in this room. She set the tray on the mahogany table.

"You put sugar enough there, did you?"

"There should be. You can see." Without a glance at him—in bath robe and slippers, he was ensconced in an easy chair—she made for the door.

"I see you are getting chummy with the captain."

His tone was friendly, too friendly for him. Nevertheless, she was grateful for it, and halted to say: "I offered him a cup of coffee on his way out. The restaurants hereabout do not open early and it must be depressing to be going out on an empty stomach on a chilly morning."

"You are so thoughtful of him. You also

brought him hot water to shave with. I never noticed you bringing any hot shaving water to other roomers."

"He comes from good people. He is accustomed to having things nice."

"How do you know whom he comes from, or what he's been accustomed to?"

"In many ways—by his manner, his bearing, his voice. By the look in his face, if nothing else. He is a kindly man, a gentleman." She emphasized the last word slightly.

"Oh-h, a gentleman! So he's your idea of a gentleman? I'll have to model myself after him, I suppose. Walk like this—" He stood up and took several heavy, lumbering strides back and forth. "And wears a coat like a horse-blanket. However—" his voice had changed to the softer, silkier one which he assumed when he had an end in view. "I don't see why you shouldn't keep on good terms with him."

She left the room without making answer. Her distrust of him was too deeply imbedded to be uprooted by any sudden change of manner, by any mouthful of fair-sounding words. Whatever he meant, it surely was not for the coaster captain's good.

That cup of coffee warmed Jan's stomach on that brisk morning, even as the girl Lena's friendliness warmed his soul. Hurrying on to the wharf where his schooner lay, he was thinking that he only needed to be seeing Jack Hoey again to make a perfect day of it.

Hoey was his great friend. He hadn't seen him for nearly two years now, not since that morning in Portland when, with her jibboom gone, her bowsprit broken off, her forward running gear hanging in disordered festoons over her bow, the three-master coaster *Iroquois* was being warped into her slip in Portland. As if she were far out in the stream and not almost under his feet, old man Carraher had stood on the caplog and roared:

"Well, what happened now?"

And Jack Hoey, sometimes called Scrappy, stood right there on her quarter and roared back:

"Oh, one of that Mendum bunch—the *Vesta*—came rollin' down The Narrows, and actin' like she owned the road. 'Bout time somebody told Big John that nobody with any guts is goin' to be crowded outa his right o' way by any party with walrus whiskers and tonnage enough himself alone to roll his vessel to her scuppers every time he steps down to looard to spit over her side.

“ ‘Get outa my way!’ the big loafer just the same as hollers at me.

“ ‘Get outa my way, you!’ I just the same as hollers back at him. ‘Yuh may be twice our tonnage, but we’re deep-loaded and you’re only in ballast, and we’re close-hauled besides bein’ on the starb’d tack, so out the way with you!’ But he holds on.

“ ‘All right,’ I says, ‘if you don’t know the rules o’ the road, ‘bout time you learned ‘em!’ and I holds on. And he holds on, and—well, here we are lookin’ like a drunk for’ard maybe, but not a drop o’ water is makin’ into her, and twelve hundred tons o’ Black Valley Red Ash is waitin’ to be scooped out of her fore and after holds.” Hoey here paused for a fresh breath and his owner’s commendation.

“A fine mess, you!” barked old Carraher.

“Huh! Take a run over to the dry dock and see what a mess he is—after he gets in.”

“And a fine bill of repairs for me!”

“Sure! But it’ll be Mr. Mendum ’ll have to pay for it, won’t he?”

“And how long will I have to wait for my money?”

“I dunno. But if it was me, I wouldn’t wait

long. Get your lawyer to tie up the *Vesta* and he'll come across quick. Great days, huh, when a cockeyed brute with a scuttle-butt for a waist thinks because he's got a whale of a four-master under him he can luff this little one out of the channel and up onto the mud bank!"

Every lumper and loafer on the wharf was answering that Jack Hoey was right, but the old rheumatics must have been troubling the old man again, for suddenly he jibed over. "This condemned habit you got of never lettin' anybody put anything over on you, what's in that for an owner? I'm the owner, you know, and you got to consider the owner's interests"—so began the old man on a new tack.

"Yeah? The owner, hah! And is it for your interests for me to get a vessel home quick 's I can, or isn't it? Take your old coal wagon and wrap her up in cotton battin' and set her up in your parlor up home, and then nothin' 'll ever happen her. I dunno but a shore cruise 'll do me good. I dunno but I'll never go to sea again. Anyway, I'm through with you right now. Good-by!"

So shouted Jack Hoey, meaning every word he said, to old Carraher. But Jan had had a talk



with the old man, and next day had gone and got hold of Jack.

“See here, Jack! You know the Old Man sometimes carries more pressure than the old boiler can stand, and it’s only natural he has to blow off steam once in a while. But he’s a great scout for all that. Now, you been sailin’ a long time for him—don’t you think you ought to go up and see him before you quit for good? You’ll never be happy ashore—you know you won’t. He didn’t come to the office this mornin’—rheumatism again. Go on up to his house now, won’t you, and have a talk with him?”

Jack had forgiving ways, and he thought a lot of Jan. He went up to the exclusive district where his owner lived in grand style. A man servant came to the door.

“Your name, please?”

“Hoey. Captain Hoey.”

“And your business, please?”

“Why, nothin’ special—just a word to Mr. Carraher. I’m one of his sailin’ masters.”

The servant went upstairs. Presently he returned. “Mr. Carraher wishes to know what it is you have to say to him.”

“You gave him my name?”

"I did, sir."

"And you told him I wanted to speak to him?"

"I did, sir."

"And he wants to know what my message is?"

"He does, sir."

"Tell him to go to hell!"

Jack ran all the way back to where he had left Jan.

"What happened?" asked Jan.

"Mr. Carraher wishes to know what your message is.' " Jack's voice was a phonographic echo of the flunkey's. "I gave him my message. I'm not sore with you, Jan, but you're the only man on earth I'd 'a' gone up to see him to please. And now, so long! I'm goin' to get as far away from vessels and the sea as a railroad c'n carry me."

Jack had taken the Portland steamer, the old *Argosy* for Boston, and from there had gone West, as far West as his money would take him. Jan received letters pretty regularly from him, from various points West. Being no thrifty soul, Jack had never had much money in hand; and so had to go to work, which was all right. Getting a job was an easy matter. His trouble was in hanging onto a job when he got one. It wasn't that his bosses did not like him. They all treated him fine.

But always there was something turning up which chafed him. All his jobs looked good at first, but soon something went wrong with him or the job, and he was off again.

Jack went West intending to stay there: but he was never at peace there—it wasn't his work, it was something else, something inside him. One day he found himself headed East. The next thing he knew he was back into Boston; and no sooner did he find himself walking along the familiar old water front than he began to feel better.

That old east wind, with the last kick of winter in it, that raw east wind which so many strangers could never say a good word for— Man, but it did smell good! They could have all the glorious climates of all their Golden Wests, but give him the old easterly that made the inside of your nose crinkle up every time you drew in a snootful of it.

Well, here he was. No more coastering for him—so he had said, and, of course, so it was to be; but also, of course, he would have to see how things were in the coasting business. He learned (keeping carefully away from Carraher's Boston office) that freights were dull. Things would probably be better in the fall.

Seeing that he was done with the sea, what did it

matter about freights or vessels? His first business was to get another job. He bought a morning paper, and there read that the street railway company were looking for healthy young men to learn to run trolley cars. Well, he was healthy enough, and an easy-going outdoor job like running a trolley, with nobody standing always by to give a man orders—it read pretty well.

He dropped around to the address named in the ad, answered all the questions put to him, and by and by a serious-looking chap with a row of gold stripes on his coat sleeve took him out for instructions.

For two round trips the old fellow explained and showed how it was done. Then: “Do you think you can manage it now?” he asked.

“No sea an’ no wind—a pretty soft watch to stand, I call it,” was Jack’s answer to that.

He took over the controller, and away went the trolley; and made easy sailing of it until rounding into Atlantic Avenue. Here a coal cart swung across his bow. Hoey ran jam up against the coal cart’s stern. The coal man did not alter his course. Jack started to bawl him out.

“No yelling at him! Give him the bell!” said Five Stripes.

Hoey gave him the bell. The coal driver let him know he heard it by turning his head and letting the white of one eye roll backward toward the car; but he did not move out of the way.

“Give him the bell again!”

Hoey gave him the bell again. The coal cart responded by suddenly stopping dead. By almost tearing the brake loose from its socket Hoey averted a collision. Hoey could hear the passengers inside asking each other what was the matter with the new motorman.

Half audibly he muttered: “What’s the matter with me? What’s the matter with you people? Don’t y’all see what’s ahead?”

Five Stripes tapped him on the shoulder. “Here, here, that won’t do! They are the Company’s customers. Passengers furnish the revenue of the Company, and it is the Company which pays you. Don’t talk back at customers; and never forget, young man, to consider the Company’s best interests. Give him the bell again.”

Hoey gave him the bell again; also, being by nature a loyal worker, gave the Company’s interests a little thought. The old fellow was right. It was the Company he should think of first.

The coal cart proceeded even more leisurely

than before. A young man passenger who had come out on the front platform now glanced at his watch, gave a jump of surprise, took a peek at the coal cart, leaned out from the steps and shouted:

"Here you, you loafer, think a man's got nothing to do but ride behind your old hearse all day?"

The coal man was perched gallantly up on a swinging leather seat. To let this new voice know that he heard he bounced up and down on his seat. To show his fine contempt for them all, he spat languidly into the street. His profile indicated a pugnacious disposition; his shoulders were those of a very able-bodied man.

"Out to sea,"—Hoey confided this to the protesting passenger as a sympathetic party—"out to sea the man to the wheel can steer 'round a vessel ahead of him. But how's a man to steer a trolley car 'round a load o' coal on the track ahead?"

"No talking to passengers! Give him the bell!"

Hoey gave him the bell. The coal man pulled up suddenly. By the murmurs which came from within the car when he jammed on the brake, Hoey knew that the passengers were talking about him again. There was a lot he wanted to say himself, but he remembered the warning—no talking back

to passengers—also the advice about the Company's interests, and so he restrained himself; but it was getting to be a tough job, this one.

The coal man swung himself down from his high seat. Something had gone wrong with the harness of the horses: at least, he was looking over the gear.

"What now?" demanded Hoey of Five Stripes, who had his watch out.

"Give him the bell, give him the bell! Two minutes more and I will take his license number and report him."

"Two minutes more"—the passenger also had his watch out—"and I'll never make the Nantasket boat."

"Two minutes more," added Hoey, "and I'll—But will yuh look at him now!"

The coal cart was hauled by two big black prancing horses with red ribbons under their ears. The driver was now leisurely readjusting the red ribbons.

"Give him the bell—one more minute!"

"Bell hell!" The passenger shoved his watch back into his pocket. "He needs more than the bell, that loafer!"

"Yuh right he does. Yuh'll miss your boat,



maybe, but I'll do what I can for you." Hoey leaped into the street, ran ahead of the coal man, whirled him around and told him what he thought of him—of his hull and his rig and his navigating ways.

And the coal man told Hoey what he thought of trolley companies that thought they owned the street, also of motormen in general, and of motormen in particular who couldn't even drive a trolley without having another man to help them. He was a most profane man.

Hoey listened patiently (any man was entitled to a come-back), till he happened to think that there were ladies in the trolley who might be listening, too. "Put the brakes on that line o' talk, d'y' hear?"

Which merely speeded up the coal man's profanity.

"Jeepers, but you're a hard breeze o' wind! Right there"— Hoey pointed with his forefinger to where the jaw-bone lay closest to the neck. "Right there, to loo'ard of your starb'd ear, is where I'm goin' to land yuh."

"Land me! You? Here? Guh-h!"

"Right there, I said." And right there Hoey landed him. Once was enough. He helped the

coal man to his feet, led him by the hand to the curb, led the prancing horses also to the curb and hopped back to the car. The front platform passenger was pleased, but not Five Stripes.

"Who is in charge of this car?" demanded Five Stripes. "Suppose that man takes the number of this car and reports me? And do you call beating men up on the street to be considering the best interests of the Company?"

"Best interests of the Company? Why, that's why I walloped that bum! Here, take your old job—I'm through!"

Jan got the history of the trolley job in a long letter. "Ain't it a puzzle," concluded Hoey, "the way I get a job so easy and lose it so quick?"

Hoey's next letter to Jan told how he had got himself a job as kitchen helper in a restaurant. He wasn't there long when he married Mollie—she was the Singing Waitress of the restaurant.

Waiting on table wasn't the job for a married woman, no more than kitchen helper for a married man; but they decided to hang onto their jobs (or Mollie did, rather) until something good turned up for him.

"What would I be doing, a big, strong girl,

idling in an empty house, and you working your bones sore?" Mollie had said.

"A great girl—wait till you meet her," so Jack had written Jan about Mollie.

It was down aboard his vessel, the riggers and painters having knocked off for the noon hour, that Jan had taken out Hoey's last letter to read once more. Jack had been promoted.

"This morning" (this was dated a week back), "this morning I'm working away in the kitchen when the cook—you've heard of yes men, Jan, haven't you? Of course—some of 'em used to work for old man Carraher. But this cook he's a *no* man, one of those wild-eyed ones who's against everybody and everything. 'All men and women,' says the cook, 'you and your wife, too, Hoey, they all come from nowhere and they are going nowhere. There's men and women who think themselves wonderful people in a wonderful world, but the best of us are poor crawling creatures—ants, worms, in a miserable place. Now, some day——'

"'Some day,' I butts in on him, 'I know I'm going to pick you up and heave you out the front window. No, out the back window, so the noise

of the breaking glass won't annoy the customers,' I said, 'and after that I'm——'

"Just then the manager comes in, saying, 'Hoey, I hear you don't drink?'

" 'I don't,' I says. 'Don't like the taste of it. Besides, if I did drink, I'd probably explode.'

" 'Good!' he says. 'That bartender out front is drunk again. I just fired him. You've tried a lot of things in your time. Ever tend bar?'

" 'No,' I says, 'but I often thought I'd like to have a wallop at it.'

" 'All right,' he says, 'there's ten dollars more a week in it than you're getting here. If you make good you can have it regular. If you don't, I'll telephone uptown for a regular barkeep. Come and look it over.'

" 'I follow him out into the restaurant and have a look. There's the usual bottled goods and other things on a shelf behind the bar, and on a shelf under the bar is the old bartender's white coat and apron. There's a dark bottle says Cough Cure on it and there's a paper-covered book marked Bartender's Guide on the cover. The manager, he picks up this Guide and he tells me that most of the trade is for straight drinks, but if anybody asks for a fancy drink, to stall him till I look it

up in the Guide. 'Nothing else,' he says, 'I guess, except,' and he looks hard at me, 'don't argue with the customers.'

"'No? Never?' I says.

"'Never,' he says.

"'But,' says I, 'suppose they get fresh?'

"'Let 'em get fresh,' he says. 'Don't argue with them, that's all. You can bawl out the cook in back there all you want, he's half nutty anyway, but customers are different.'

"'It's a tough assignment,' I says, 'but all right.' I put on a white coat and tied on the white apron."

That ended Hoey's last letter. Jan was curious to know how he had made out as a bartender, hoping that he would be weary by now of it. Here was this fine vessel that he had bought and that in ten days or two weeks would be ready for sea, and Jack Hoey just the man to go master of her.

Jack had declared that he was done with the sea, but Jan knew better. Old Carraher had advertised Jack as the sassiest and most impudent coasting skipper out of Portland or Boston, which maybe he was, but also he was the best young coasting skipper between Portland and Ferdinando—if an owner didn't try to ride him, of course.

Out to sea was the best place for Jack. Ashore he'd always have to be taking orders from some deck swab or other, while out to sea he'd be his own boss—nothing but high winds and seas to bother him there, and they never did bother him much, not with a good vessel under him.

Jan was bubbling over at the prospect of seeing Hoey again. On the envelope of Hoey's last letter was the address—The Maritime Hotel—and in high spirits Jan strolled up the wharf to find him; but it happened that just then his foreman came along to say that the sailmaker wanted Jan to look over some 00 canvas before he cut it. So Jan let Hoey go until later.

In the restaurant and bar of the Maritime Hotel business was usual for that time of the day—that is, not overbrisk. This was the morning when Jan, on his way to look up Hoey, had been deflected by the hurry-up message from the sailmaker.

Jack Hoey was behind the bar. The dull business afforded him leisure to take account of stock, also to read an occasional recipe in the Bartender's Guide. He was an honest soul who always tried to be on the job—while he held a job. Occa-

sionally he took time to glance at the reflection of Mollie in the mirror behind the bar. Mollie was a wonder. She was growing ever lovelier to look at; and her increasing tenderness was growing beyond his understanding. Their glances would meet in the mirror, and they would smile fondly at each other.

A customer came in and called for a whiskey. Hoey served him, rang up the sale, flipped the change—a dime—into the air, and spun it down to the customer. He had always admired bartenders who could do that, and now, after not so much practice, he could do it himself like an expert. So far, all fine. He smiled at Mollie, who was singing:

O, life was a dull and wear-r-y road  
 And long was the way to me,  
 Till my own, 'dear-r own r-rovin' lad  
 Came sailin' in from sea——

“And the mutton stew is very good to-day, sir,” Hoey heard her say to a customer who seemed to be in doubt.

“Mutton stew for me, then,” said the customer, folding his menu card. Most of them, the regular



ones, anyway, took whatever she recommended. Hoey was watching her across the floor and through the swinging kitchen door.

A friendly-looking man at the end of the bar—he was becoming a steady customer of late—called for a cocktail.

“What kind?” asked Hoey.

“Any kind you think is good for me.”

Hoey served the drink, and glued his eyes once more on Mollie, who had returned from the kitchen.

A retired sea captain known as The Sponge had entered. He had been watching Hoey mix the cocktail. He was rapping on the bar for a little attention. Hoey had seen him, but was trying to look as if he hadn't. The man was a local pest and the manager had told Hoey to serve him no more liquor than he was compelled to. The man got drunk too easily. Once more The Sponge rapped on the bar: “Say, you!—got time for a payin' customer?”

“Have I got—” Hoey recalled the manager's caution about arguing with customers. With laborious politeness he asked The Sponge what he would have.

"What'll I have? How long you been tendin' bar?"

Hoey cast a look up at the clock: "Six days, three hours and ten minutes."

"Y'act like it."

"That so?"

"Yeh, that's so. Gimme a Patagonia Swizzle."

"Give yuh what?"

"Patagonia Swizzle, I said."

"Oh-h, *Patagonia Swizzle*? Sure!"

As if to pick up something he had dropped, Hoey bent under the bar. What he was after was the Bartender's Guide. He gave a quick peek into it, first in the S's, then in the P's. No Patagonia Swizzle under either letter.

With his back to the bar, The Sponge was vacantly viewing the life of the restaurant. Hoey stepped softly to where the friendly-looking customer was having his drink, and: "Ever hear of a Patagonia Swizzle?" he whispered.

"Not me."

"Nor me. Nor him, I'll bet, before he said it just now. Watch what I slip him!"

Hoey picked out his longest glass, spooned in the cracked ice, picked off the first bottle to hand and from it poured a big spoonful. After pouring

it in he examined the label on the bottle. Absinthe! Fine—he made it two spoonfuls. He took the other bottles as they came to hand: Brandy, Whiskey, Sherry, Port, Gin, and poured in a taste of each.

He added a dash of Orange Juice to vary the color, and a dash of Vanilla Extract to vary the flavor. The bottle of Cough Cure under the bar caught his eye. “Yo, ho, ho! and a taste o’ that,” hummed Hoey. In it went. In behind the Cough Cure he spotted another bottle. Since his first day there Hoey had been guessing at what it was. Oily-looking, yellowish stuff it was with no label on it. Besides forever talking of his cough Hoey remembered that the old bartender complained repeatedly of his lumbago. This might be cod liver oil, or it might be some kind of rubbing liniment for his old joints. Whatever it was, it ought to add a little more kick—in went a splash of that.

The long glass was filled. Hoey shook it up, strained it, held the result up for inspection. Not so bad. Down the length of the bar he whispered to the wide-grinning friendly customer:

“Let him throw that into himself, the loafer, and I’ll bet the next time he orders a fancy drink of me, he’ll think of a hotter place than Pata-

gonia to name it after.” He dropped in the cherry, stuck in a straw—made it two straws, pushed it carefully across the bar toward The Sponge’s back, and sang out cheerily, “There y’are!”

The Sponge faced about, made a face at the straws, cast first one and then the other onto the floor, fished up the cherry and threw that after the straws, had a top look and a side look at his drink, and then a long sniff.

“What y’ call that?”

“What did y’ order?”

“Ordered Pat’gonia Swizzle, but”—he leered cunningly across the bar at Hoey—“no such drink—never was.”

“There wasn’t, but there is, and that’s it to your hand. Four bits—half a dollar.”

The Sponge laid down a half-dollar, lifted his glass, opened his mouth, shut his eyes, threw back his head and gulped it down. That was his way of drinking, letting it all sluice down his wide open throat in one gulp. He took another gulp—this one plainly for air—folded his lips tightly over each other, and backed uncertainly away, his rolling eyes on Hoey as he backed. Half-way to the door he tottered back, threw another half-dollar on the bar, and said hoarsely:

"For Gaw's sake, barkeep, have one y'shelf!"

Hoey shook his head severely. "Not me."

"No? A won'ful drink, Pat'gonia Swizzle."

"I know. But I don't drink on watch. Besides— See this?" He reached down, brought up the faithful Guide, and read in a resonant voice:

"No good bartender will accept treats from customers."

The Sponge was hanging weakly to the bar for support. "Whey shay zhat?"

"Right here—see!" Pushing his forefinger along under the words to prove there was no deception, Hoey read aloud: "*No good bartender will accept treats from customers. Such practice invariably results in customers asking for credit later.*" He threw the Guide in under the bar. "And that's me, a good"—he tapped his chest solemnly—"a GOOD bartender."

"Zhat so? Aw right!" The Sponge picked up his rejected half-dollar, wore around and filled away for the street door. There was a table in his course. "Hard-a-lee!" yelled Hoey.

"Shanks." With dignity The Sponge luffed clear, jibed over and was away again. In three tacks he weathered the street door, which the manager was holding solicitously open for him.

“GOOD bartender—nya-a-ah!” With this good-by message The Sponge luffed through the door, swung off and went plunging down the street before a fine breeze of wind.

Hoey dejectedly rinsed out the Swizzle glass. “Havin’ to take orders from a flounder like that, d’y’ wonder it’s sometimes tough hangin’ onto a job?”

The friendly customer was grinning. “I’d like to be with that stew when that mixture begins to work on him. He’ll be ringin’ in the fire alarm. If nothing happens him, I’ll try one next time I come in.”

“Nothing’ll happen him. There’s a scale on the inside of his stomach like on the inside of an old tugboat boiler.”

All was peace and quiet again, when in came a vividly-dressed, handsome young man with hair rolled beautifully up on one side of his head. A pansy graced his buttonhole.

Hoey had never seen him before, but he had seen pictures of him. In the café upstairs the hotel ran a cabaret show evenings. This was the cabaret dancer.

The dancing man sat down to one of Mollie’s

tables. Mollie stepped over to take his order, singing softly:

O my own, dear-r own r-rovin' lad,  
And the words he said to me, sir!  
But the dearest wor-r-d of all he said  
Was——

In the mirror Hoey saw the reflection of the dancing man seizing Mollie's hand. He saw Mollie pull it away, and heard her say, mildly enough: "You must not do that, sir!"

Hoey saw the dancing man try to seize Mollie's hand again, saw her impatiently draw it free, and heard her say, not so mildly this time: "I said you must not do that!"

"O, come on! Don't be so coy!"

The manager coughed nervously from behind his cigar case; the dancing man turned his head toward the manager. At that moment Hoey stepped softly around the open end of the bar.

"O, come on!" With a wary eye out for the manager, the dancing man was groping backward for Mollie's hand. He felt a hand close around his. It did not feel like a girl's hand. He took a sly downward look. It didn't look like a girl's



hand. His eyes followed the hand up to the wrist, and saw a white apron, but no pretty little white apron such as the Singing Waitress wore. The apron enclosed a waist, but not a girlish waist. The dancing man looked higher up the waist and saw a chin, but not the white, round, deliciously smooth chin of Mollie. It was a bristly jaw he saw, and above the jaw a pair of brown eyes—Mollie's eyes were blue—a pair of brown eyes from which sparks seemed to be flying.

Hoey tapped the dancing man on the chest; tapped him almost kindly: "Look here, Bo. Take a soft word from me and let this young lady alone."

"What *you* so mad about?"

"What 'm I so mad about?" Hoey lifted Mollie's left hand—she wasn't pulling it away now, the dancing man noticed—lifted Mollie's left hand so that the other might see her wedding ring. There was reverence and high pride in Hoey's manner of doing it.

"See that, Bo? You do? Then what y' askin' me what for?"

"Is she married to you?"

"She's married to me, yes."

"How'd I know?"

"How'd you know? Did yuh have to know? Knew she was married to somebody, didn't yuh? Got eyes in your head, haven't yuh? Know a good woman when yuh see one, don't yuh? Or do yuh?"

"Jackie, dear?" Mollie squeezed and patted his hand. "Don't mind him, Jackie. Some of them don't be knowing half of the time what they be doing and saying the other half of the time."

"I s'pose they don't, the poor nuts. But, Mollie, if this cockroach ever looks at you again, if any water beetle comin' here ever looks at you cross-eyed, or opens up his yap to you, just pass the word and— Well, no use me losin' my temper——"

Emitting many little back-fire words over one shoulder, Hoey returned to his station. "There's countries on earth with millions o' human bein's—human bein's, mind yuh—starvin' to death, and rats like him gettin' three meals a day." He uttered that sentiment in a stage whisper to the manager, who was trying to look as if he had no hearing.

Mollie opened out the bill of fare before the dancing man; with lifted pad and pencil she awaited his order. He seemed to be having difficulty in selecting a dish, whereat Mollie said:

"The mutton stew is very good to-day, sir."

And the dancing man, with his eyes fixed piously on the bill of fare, said: "I'll have a mutton stew."

Mollie brought the stew. The dancing man picked at it, paid for it, slipped inconspicuously out the door. The cocktail customer, obviously a friendly soul, and who had been lingering at the end of the bar, now stepped across the room and bought a handful of cigars. While lighting up he began a casual sort of conversation with the manager.

All was peace and quiet once more, or Hoey thought it was, when the manager came over to the bar.

"Hoey, I like you. I didn't mind you having a little fun with that foolish souse, The Sponge. And I wouldn't have minded if you had kicked that tango hound into the middle of the street. You're all right and your wife's all right—a great girl. But don't you think yourself she's too good-looking and you too scrappy for both of you to be here?"

Hoey grimaced ruefully. "Somethin's been tellin' me I'd soon have to be huntin' another job," he said to the cocktail customer, who by now had returned to the bar.

"I know where there's one waiting for you," said the customer.

When Jan got through with his sailmaker it was after the lunch hour, time to turn to and have an eye to the afternoon work of his riggers and carpenters; and so he did not head for the Maritime Hotel until after five o'clock.

He had no trouble finding the hotel. He stepped up to the man behind the cigar counter and asked for Hoey.

The man behind the counter looked Jan over, opened a drawer under the counter, and produced an envelope sealed:

"You must be Captain Tingloff?"

"I am."

"I guessed you were. Your friend Hoey can hit a man off pretty well in a few words. He left this letter for you." He passed over the envelope. Jan opened it and read:

**FRIEND JAN:**

Since writing you last I lost my job and I am leaving here because one of the customers tried to get spoony with Mollie. A couple of them before that tried to hold her hand. I didn't mind them so much. I told them where

they got off and they moderated their ways. But this last guy I threw out. The boss is a good scout, but he can't have his help throwing customers out onto Atlantic Avenue, he says. The first motto of a business house, he says, is to stand behind the customers, right or wrong. The customer is always right and the waitress or the barkeep or any more of the help is always wrong. It's what the cash register says that makes or breaks a business, he says. He's all right, a good scout, and treated both Mollie and me decent. He's maybe got the right business idea, but don't it make business out to be a hell of a thing for a man who's half Irish to be in? I'll say yes.

I was getting tired of the place, anyway. It was a good, clean place, but I guess the floor was too steady under my feet. Nothing like the feel of a deck heaving under you, is there? You bet! And all the time seeing only people's heads and shoulders across the bar from me and only loads of coal or trolleys and the brick side of a house when I tried to look out into the street. I guess it was making me restless, Jan. And there was a man comes along in from the office of the old Portland & Boston S. S. line. I got to know him from his liking some of the fancy drinks I mixed him. I got them out of a book, the Bartender's Guide that I wrote you about.

To-day he tells me how the crew of the *Argosy* walked ashore, the barkeep and two stewards and stewardess being among them. And I thinks fast and asks him how about me for the bartender's billet and the wife for stewardess. He said all right, why not? I asked Mollie and she says that where I go she will be glad to go. A great girl, Jan—wait till you meet her.

I think it will be better than tending bar ashore, Jan, and Mollie having only to do with the women passengers will like it better, too. Come down aboard and see us. If you go back home, be sure you go back on the *Argosy* and we'll have a good, old-time talk about things we both know more about than bars and restaurants. My watch aboard ship is from six in the evening till the bar closes for the night, which is I don't know what time yet. Depends on how business is, I guess. Fair wind till I see you, and Mollie says the same, even if she never met you.

Your friend,

JACK HOEY.

\* \* \* \* \*

"The *Argosy*?" Jan was folding up the letter. "I came to Boston on her a couple o' mornings ago."

"Hoey was expecting you in yesterday morning."

"I'd been here yesterday mornin' only the boat was late. She's late a lot lately. And I got held up to-day. But think of Jack tendin' bar! He never took a drink in his life."

"The one whose place he filled took enough of 'em. He used to blow up like a syphon of soda sometimes. Your friend Hoey though—perhaps if he took a drink once in a while it might be good for him. He mightn't have so much extra steam to blow off if he did."

Jan chuckled. "Jack was always high pressure. What kind of a girl did he marry?"

"She's a fine girl, the best, but she's too good looking for him to be working in the same place with and hold his job long. He's too naturally scrappy."

"He's not changed much then. Scrappy Jack we called him in Portland." Jan smiled at another thought he had. Jack would soon be ripe to go to sea again, the place where he belonged.

The restaurant clock said half past five, and Jan liked to eat early. He sat down to a table and ordered supper.



Jan had his supper and headed for his room. He ascended the front steps, opened the front door, closed it behind him—all this softly, like a man expecting adventure.

There was light in the hall above—bars of it were shooting through the open stair rail onto the stair wall—but there was no light in the lower hall. He peered about him, and presently became aware of a figure under the hall chandelier.

It was the Goles girl, and at her feet was the little cricket, the solid two-inch plank thing with the stout legs outspreading from its four corners. Jan always smiled when he saw that stool. It reminded him of the potato pigs he used to rig up for his boy at home.

The Goles girl held a match in one hand. Jan smiled at her, as much now for the thought of that chandelier so high above her head, as of the pigs and his boy. “Those gas lights must ’ve been hung by some seven-footer who thought nobody but himself was ever goin’ to light ’em. Let me.”

Taking the match from her upraised hand, he lit it. He lit it in the good old-fashioned man’s way—across the seat of his trousers.

He reached up, turned on the gas jet, touched the match to it. He held the burnt match up, seeking

a place to throw it. She held up her palm for it. He dropped it in. She thrust it into the little pocket in her apron.

Jan wanted to say something, if no more than that it was a fine evening, but the muscles of his throat tightened up. He went slowly up the stairs. Half way up, he looked back, and caught her glancing in sidewise fashion up at himself. Confused, he hurriedly resumed his way upstairs.

At the head of the stairs, where the curve of the rail served to shield him, he dared to look down at her again. She was standing on the little stool, reaching up to lower the gas flame to its customary economical half capacity. Jan, not thinking of economy, or of anything else except that he was lighting the gas for her, had turned it too high.

Her figure was in the shadow from the waist down, but all above—her breasts, shoulders, throat, the curve of her chin, her arms upraised, were clearly outlined. These and her bare hands, with fingers so white and shapely, made her look like another woman, a lovely, new creature, not a drab, household drudge, under the hall light.

The gas light, before she lowered it, shone full into her eyes. Staring upward, she was squinting under the open glare of it. The squinting eyes and

the deep up and down line between them, gave her a look which Jan had noticed that morning in the kitchen,—the look of the bewildered child trying to understand things, so many things; or at least this was Jan's reading of it, he wondering what the things were and how he could help her to understand—if she would let him.

There was more color in her cheeks than he had noticed before. Her lips were parted and her teeth—the first time he had seen them—gleamed out from between them.

He fancied that she was shooting a glance from her squinting eyes up to where he half crouched behind the curve of the upper stair rail. He straightened up in a new embarrassment. No longer hearing his footsteps on the stairs, she had probably guessed, she must have, that he was standing there, half hiding, spying down upon her. In great agitation he scuttled on to the second floor landing.

Striving to step softly he made for his room.

“Well, Cap, how's ev'ry little thing with you this fine evenin'?”

He had had no suspicion that anybody was nearer than the girl in the hall below. He whirled in utter confusion.

"Scare yuh, did I?"

The girl Goldie was standing under the half-light of the chandelier on the second floor hall. She must have come from the floor above. The thought that she hadn't seen him with the Goles girl below relieved his mind. He smiled at her.

"Oh, I'm feelin' pretty good."

"Feelin' good enough to buy a girl a drink?"

"A drink? You mean a drink of liquor?"

Jan had put in most of his man's days at sea. What time he had had ashore had been put in mostly at Portland. As a coasting captain he had put into various American Atlantic ports, but for want of friends in them he had stuck fairly close to his vessel. He had been married young. As a happily married man the usual dissipations of careless seafaring men ashore had never tempted him.

He was a curiously unsophisticated man, but not so much so that he had not had his doubts of this girl's character. He would have had no doubt whatever only that he could not bring himself to believe that Goles would be palming off a girl of the streets for his cousin.

She was moving toward him, smiling mischievously; also stepping cautiously, for what reason he

could not understand, on the tips of her toes. She seized both lapels of his coat, stood so close that their bodies almost touched. She shifted one hand to pick at the lapel, picking at it with a forefinger as if to remove a thread or speck of dust.

"Did you speak, Captain?"

He had not spoken, his thoughts being still for the girl below, but he felt that he should by now be saying something. "You don't want to start drinkin'. A girl of your age! No, no, don't!"

She turned her head to listen to something. Jan listened too. A quick step was coming up the stairs. Nervously he loosened the girl's grip of his coat, opened his room door and hurried in.

Goldie stared at the closed door. "*Start* drinkin'! That's a hot one!"

Lena was now beside Goldie. "I told you he was not like so many of the others and that you must not hang around him. Now we must settle it once for all. Are you going to leave him alone or not?" She said it in a whisper.

Goldie's voice was low enough too: "And do you think you can bluff me into leavin' him alone?"

"There will be no bluff about it. The police are not far off. The police—do you hear?—are watch-

ing this place now. They are watching you, too, probably."

"The police!" Goldie brought her thumb to her nose, wiggled her fingers. "There's what I'd do to any cop who gave me a hard look. They can't bluff me. Let's see 'em try it—or you."

Her defiance was mostly for effect. Thoughtfully she descended to the basement, sought out Goles in the pool-room and to him reported Lena's threat.

He sneered. "So that's her plan? Let her call the police in. They won't catch me napping. I'm ready to get out of here at a minute's notice any time and never come back. What about her and the big captain?"

"Say, Harry, d'y' know, I'm more than satisfied she's tryin' to grab him off for herself!"

"Yes? Well, what are you getting excited about? What's wrong with that? Haven't you any memory, or were you too woozy to remember anything after all those high balls you had in the back room last night? Let her grab him off, only don't you forget to keep an eye on them both, and tell me when she does it."

Jan Tingloff stared dully out of the window. He

was feeling lonesome: he had been so feeling pretty regularly of late. Usually of an evening when he felt blue he would take a walk or go to the theater or some movie, but to-night it was raining.

He faced away from the window, lit the gas, sat himself carefully down, expecting to find the frail little rocker under him, and discovered instead a chair fit for an able-bodied man.

What a comfortable chair it was! He bounced up and down to test the solidity of it. It was all right. Then followed the thought: Who put it there?

Who could have put it there but the house girl? And what a weight—he lifted it for proof—for a slim girl to be dragging into his room!

The chair evoked fresh images of her, further speculation. Throughout all that day on the wharf, absorbed as he should have been in the business of overhauling his vessel, he had been thinking more of her than of his work, more even than of his friend, Jack Hoey.

Her name was Goles, and she was up early and late, a drudge from morning to night: a poor relation of the landlord's of course—a poor girl who, having no friends, had to do something to make a



living. The landlord was a cheap sort, which was no fault of hers: many fine men and women sometimes have horrible relations.

So reasoned Jan; and, having settled that question in the only way it could be settled to suit him, he filled his pipe, picked up his "Days of Chivalry" and snuggled himself down into the big chair for a bit of forgetful reading. He read chapter after chapter from the "Days", stanza upon stanza from the "Poems". Scores of stanzas he read, and would have read scores more only for having to be up early in the morning.

He set his alarm clock, which made him think of standing watches out to sea, and that made him think again of Jack Hoey.

"I'll have to hunt out Jack on that Portland steamer soon," he thought. Jack a barkeeper! A seagoin' barkeep! He chuckled at the thought. A great fellow, Jack, but he didn't belong ashore. Out to sea he fitted, and there he would have him soon, or know why.

His last thought, however, was not of Jack Hoey, as he slid under the blankets. The picture of a girl peering up from under the gas light in the hall below had come between him and his heroes

and his thoughts of his friend Hoey more than once that evening.

“Who’d think—” he murmured—“who’d think a girl so down-and-out lookin’ one day could be so fresh and pretty lookin’ the next?” And so murmuring, he fell into sleep.

#### IV

**I**T was Jan's third morning in Boston and his alarm clock had once more gone into action. It was a buster of an alarm clock, loud enough to be heard by even a sleepy coaster's cook above the roaring of a gale outside. Jan was growing ashamed of the racket it was making mornings. He reached over, grabbed it, smothered it under the pillow, held it smothered until the last clang-a-lang had died away.

His night time depression had left him. With the light of the morning his habitual depression usually would leave him, but this morning, without knowing why—he was no one to study the whys and wherefores of his inner being—he was feeling better than usual. He was feeling almost lively. Whistling softly, he swung himself out of bed.

He waited for the knock which would announce his shaving water at the door. No knock came. He waxed impatient, peered out, and there was the hot water waiting for him. He took it in, and

shaved, ears cocked for the fall of the house girl's light step in the hall, the sign that she was on her way to the kitchen. Hearing no step, he proceeded to dress leisurely, his mind on the coffee of the morning before. Another cup of coffee would go very well again, if only he could maneuver to get it.

He was all dressed, but still no step in the hall. He waited a while longer, wishing to give her plenty of time, though chafing slightly as he thought of those riggers and painters. Great loafers some of them when he wasn't standing by to overlook them. Leave it to some of them, and his vessel wouldn't be ready for sea in another month.

When he could no longer stand doing nothing, he left his room. He lingered in the hall; he lingered on the stairs. He clung to the front door before letting himself into the cold street, peering back toward the kitchen door, which was closed.

He should be going along, but still he waited.

The kitchen door opened. She came out with a loaded tray held before her. Coffee for somebody—who was it?

He saw her stop abruptly in the kitchen doorway. She must have seen him. If she were thinking of him at all, she could not avoid seeing him.

He called out "Good mornin', Miss Goles!" and tipped the brim of his hat.

"Good morning." It was but a dull echo of the cheerful greeting of the morning before: without even looking his way, she disappeared into a room half way down the hall.

Jan heard a loud voice, a complaining voice from the room. He had no intention of spying on her, but he did want to make certain of the voice. He listened intently. It was Goles's voice.

Goles was her employer, also, of course, her blood relation—her uncle, cousin, whatever it was, and she had to hurry, poor girl, to his order. The thought explained her failure to invite him to his morning coffee, even as it increased his indignation against Goles. Breakfast for that loafer!

Poor girl! What hard luck to have only that man between herself and the world. He let himself out into the street.

Five days passed after that without his seeing the Goles girl again. She was still in the house, he knew. The morning hot water at his door, the continued cleanliness of his room, the neat way his bed was made up, his pajamas folded just so under his pillow, the exact placing of his bedroom slippers, the careful arrangement of his photographs

and shaving gear on his dresser,—these were little touches that he could not doubt.

But where was she? Several times he thought he detected her step in the hall: once he opened his door suddenly, hoping at least to get a sight of her. She was not there, which did not convince him that she had not been there, she being like the wind on her feet. It was then he said to himself: —“If she wants to avoid me, why should I bother her?”

That for some queer reason she was avoiding him, he felt certain. He pondered every possible reason for her avoidance of him. In the Maritime Restaurant, where he was now eating, he seasoned his meals with these curious musings. Only one reason there was that he could see: he was no good at hiding his feelings; he never had been; her unexpected smiling glance over her coffee cup at him that morning in the kitchen had sent his nerves tingling, his blood racing. She had probably guessed what the matter was with him, all women were great guessers that way—or so he'd been told anyway—and she had guessed his growing interest in her. She had guessed that, and didn't care to encourage him—didn't care for him, and was

too honest to encourage him. What else? Nothing else?

He had no blame for her in that: Why should she be interested in a rough, homely, dull man like himself?

It was the fifth day since that cup of coffee, the eighth day of his stay in Boston, and throughout all this day, while he went around his vessel's deck with such a frowning brow as to keep his helpers jumping, his frowns were mostly for thoughts of the Goles girl. It was a slight easement to his soul that later in the day he was to meet Hoey and his wife. Hoey's steamer was down from Portland that morning, and he had sent word for Jan to meet him and Mollie at the Maritime for a bite of supper. It would have to be an early supper, because he and Mollie would have to be back aboard the boat by six o'clock.

At three o'clock Jan called it a day aboard the vessel, and headed for his room. He wanted time to clean up and get into his best shore clothes to meet Jack Hoey's wife. He could meet Jack in rags and Jack would not care, but all women weren't that way, especially meeting them for the first time, and he didn't want Jack's wife to think his friends were a lot of tramps.



Seeking in his clothes for his bunch of keys he discovered that he had no keys with him. He had forgotten to change them into his working clothes that morning, one more proof to himself, who needed no more proofs, that something beside his vessel was on his mind these days. He must have left his room door unlocked in coming away that morning, but no harm in that—he never left money in his room, and the house girl could lock his door when she came around to clean up.

He halted on the house steps. He had only to ring the door bell to be let in, but who would have to let him in? Why, she would. That wouldn't do. It would be too embarrassing to her when she was trying to avoid him.

He decided to get in by way of the basement pool-room, hoping fervently that he would not be held up as he passed through. He had no ill will for the young loafers around the place, but he could not go Goles. Since that lodger's attempted assault on the house girl, since seeing for himself how he was driving that poor little thing to her unceasing toil,—whenever since then Jan had stopped to think of Goles for more than five seconds, he would experience something akin to a brain storm. Knowing that he was no man to con-

ceal his feelings, he did not want to meet Goles any more than compelled to. Some day, he knew, he would be sure to tell the man exactly what he thought of him. He did not mind hurting Goles's feelings, but he did fear that Goles might take it out on her.

He stepped down into the pool-room, and there was Goles all ready to greet him. "Well, if it isn't Captain Tingloff! Where have you been keeping yourself, Captain. I was only thinking a moment ago that you haven't set your foot in here for a whole week now. Just think, a whole week! Keeping you busy, are they?"

"I sort of keep myself half way busy." Jan was heading resolutely for the back stairs.

"That's the idea, Captain, keep yourself busy always. Everything going all right with you upstairs?"

Why should the man be smiling at him?

"Everything's been goin' all right for me."

There was no discouraging Goles this day. He was at Jan's side in the basement hall. "Room all right? Nothing lacking in the care of your room, is there? If there is, let me know. Anything I can do for you, why just let me know, Captain.

Anything, I said, and I mean just that—ANYTHING!”

He whispered that last word in Jan's ear.

“Thanks, there's nothin'. My room's kept fine. Couldn't be kept finer.” Almost brutally, that is for Jan, he brushed past Goles and rushed up the stairs.

By the time he arrived at the hall above, he had forgotten Goles. He halted, squinted about him, peeked into the kitchen, strained eyes and ears for the echo of the soft foot-fall, the rustle of a thin dress, the sight of her flying figure somewhere.

He could still have summoned her by ringing the front door bell. He meditated on that, but gave up the idea: What would he say to her when she came?

He wanted to see her, and he was afraid to see her. He would have preferred to have come on her unawares,—he might be able so to preserve his composure.

He stepped warily up the stairs. He could be light on his feet when he tried. On his own floor he halted, holding his breath, still hoping to catch a glimpse of her moving in or out of some room. But no sight or sound of her, no open room door anywhere.

He padded toward his room and—he thought of it only then—he had no key to his room.

Here was a situation! He would have to call for her after all, to be let into his room. He was in a sweat at the thought. Automatically, his hand on the knob, he turned it and pushed in.

The door opened up before him. There was some one there, some one buried in the deep lap of the big chair.

It was the Goles girl.

She was staring fixedly up at him. Or was she staring at something far beyond him? She held one of his books, one of the Chivalry ones with silver letters on the bright blue cover. And she was as rosy and flushed as a child who has been surprised out of a happy dream.

He drew a resolute breath: “Good evenin’, Miss.”

She leaped out of the chair. “Oh, it is you!”

“Me? Of course. Who else?”

“For a moment I thought—I—I was dusting, Captain. Once a week I give the rooms a thorough going-over. I have to do that to keep them really clean.”

Jan nodded that he understood. “An’ you keep

'em nice an' clean too, and—" He recalled that he had said something like that before and stopped dead. A moment later he was glad he had said it: She had flushed up anew, and was smiling at him.

"I sat down to rest a moment. While resting I could not help looking into this book, Captain. I had been reading it before."

"Of course. Help yourself any time to any of 'em, Miss. There's half a dozen more in my suit case. Take 'em—any of 'em—all of 'em—along with you any time you want. Keep 'em if you want to. I got a lot more home."

"No, no, they are too lovely to keep from you." She was about to set the book back on the dresser. Jan reached for it, slowly he drew it from her hand. He rushed into words.

"Some great fuhlas used to live in the old days, don't you think, Miss? Nobody like 'em now."

"I wouldn't say that, Captain. There must be many fine brave men in the world yet. There always will be, don't you think?"

"Oh, sure! I got a friend who'd make a great one of these knights if he'd been born a few hundred years back."

"A sea captain, is he?"

"He used to be, but not now. He's a barkeep.

A sea-going barkeeper." His awkwardness had fled; he chuckled. "Good men have all kinds of jobs. And good women. See here"—he had opened the book. "Ever read 'Young Lochinvar'?"

"I read it at school—a favorite of yours, is it, Captain?"

"It always was."

"But what—what do you think of his running off with another man's intended bride?"

"Why, I don't see why not, so long as they weren't already married. Maybe a bit rough on the bridegroom, though, he wasn't to blame, the poor fuhla, if he wasn't handsome."

"Why no. No woman cares, except in her foolish years, for a man's looks. He would be to blame though if he lacked a real man's qualities."

"What qualities now?"

"Why, the things a real man should be—kind and decent, and strong to protect her. That girl found out too late the sort of man she was to be married to."

He nodded thoughtfully. "I suppose it must be tough for a woman to think she's got a good man and learns he's not. But this Lochinvar'd have an easier time of it running off with her those days, than now, wouldn't he?"

"Easier in what way, Captain?"

"Clear sailin' for him in those days. No telephone to head him off, no telegraph messages. No motor cops to chase him. He'd need more than a fast horse these days. Even with an automobile—or the airplanes they're beginnin' to talk about—he'd have to go some. I don't know where he could take her so they couldn't go after him and get him."

"Not out to sea, Captain?"

"He could, o' course. I never thought of that. He could take her out to sea. A nice fresh breeze o' wind, an' a vessel can soon lose herself from anybody chasin' her on the wide ocean."

She was now replacing the things on the dresser. He looked to see her replace his razor. He had been regularly leaving out the particular razor for the day, so that he might find it put back into its place in the case on his return in the evening. She was putting it back now.

She had been working rapidly, nervously; she was now more slowly setting up the photographs, inclining them accurately against the base of the mirror in the same position which he had given them originally.

"Your mother?" she asked, indicating.

"My mother, yes."



“And your boy?”

“My boy, yes.”

She bent forward to examine more closely the boy's face. “A fine boy, a healthy, strong-looking boy, Captain.”

“Oh, healthy all right. Y'ought to see him eat!” He was entirely at ease now. “And strong? A little pony for stren'th. See that suit case o' mine? You know how heavy it was when you carried it upstairs the mornin' I came here?”

“When I *tried* to carry it. It was you who carried it for me.”

“So I did!” He had not forgotten that he had taken it from her, nor that one of her cotton gloves had slipped from her hand. She was not wearing the gloves now, he noticed; they were stuck in her waist belt beside the big bunch of keys. Her hands were bare of ornament; not even a single ring on her fingers. He liked that.

“Anyway, when I was leavin' home he picked up that suit case. I'm braggin' maybe—he didn't exactly pick it up. He took hold of it with both hands and lifted it off the floor and carried it—maybe he did drag it part way—from the middle o' the parlor floor to the front door. He had to heave-

to once, but he made it. A little pony, that's what he is for stren'th."

"He looks it. He resembles you, too. And the young woman"—she held the photograph between her hands—"your wife?"

He nodded.

She paused. "A lovely, good face."

"And a lovely, good wife and mother she was."

"*Was?* Oh-h—! Not——"

"Yes—she's been dead a year and six months."

Reverently she set his wife's photograph beside the others.

"I did not know. I wouldn't have asked." Without speaking further, without looking again at him, she slipped from the room.

Jan stared at the door. An instant later he pounded a fist into a palm. That was it. What a stupid man he was! Why, of course she'd keep out of his way, she thinking he was married all the time.

He picked up the photograph of his wife, recalling how before she died she had said:

"You have been a good husband to me, Jan dear, and you will be a good husband to some other woman after I am gone." He had protested, and she had answered:

"It will be best for you to marry again—God never meant you to live alone. Only remember, Jan dear, choose a woman who will love the boy."

He had nodded mutely, believing that he could never marry another woman after knowing her, and so he had said to his mother. She, the wise one, had said nothing, except: "Never mind that now, Jan. Let time tell you what to do."

He had lived to learn that his wife and his mother were right. He was a lonesome man, and his boy needed a mother. His mother was a great woman, but she had other grandchildren, and she could not live forever.

He put the photographs back in place, and in doing so noticed that the dresser was now covered with a new linen cloth. "Something of her own," he thought. "She maybe had to buy it herself—she wantin' to have everything looking pretty."

His alarm clock, ticking noisily away on the washstand awoke him at last from his reverie. It was time to be washing up and going to meet Hoey and his wife.

The lunch with Hoey and his wife was in the Maritime Restaurant. It was the manager's belated wedding gift.

It was a good lunch and a joyous occasion. Jan began by saying to Hoey in a stage whisper: "How contented you're lookin', Jack: But will you tell me how such a homely one as you ever captured such a beauty?"

"My Jackie homely?" cried Mollie. "Why, Captain, Jackie is not homely. And if he was, it's little difference it would make to me, Captain. It's only a fool of a woman who cares for good looks in a man."

"Fight it out," chuckled Hoey. Then: "Lemme tell yuh something, Jan. A man's looks to Mollie is the same as a coat o' paint on a vessel to you an' me. A couple o' coats o' paint pretties a vessel up o' course, but she could be all barnacles and rust and you an' me, Jan, or anybody else who knows a vessel, we could see what she was, hah, boy? What we look to know is can she handle and sail and stand up in a breeze—that right? I looked like a tramp when I drifted into this place, but Mollie gets one peek at my lines and knows me right away for a weatherly craft—that right, Mollie?"

"You did not look like a tramp, Jackie. The heart and soul of a man shone out of you when you turned and looked at me the first time ever I saw you, dear."

Hoey had an underhung fighter's jaw, but his eyes were brown and gentle when he was not in a fighting mood. His laughter vanished in a soft smile: "You're all right, Mollie girl—don't ever change." He reached for her hand across the table.

It did Jan good just to look at them. "You never wrote me how you came to get married, Jack. What happened after you lost your trolley job?"

"After that? O, yes. Well, I was beginning to think that tryin' to make a living ashore was like trying to beat to wind'ard all the time. I strolled back along Atlantic Avenue. Only for the smell o' that sea-breeze flowing in from the sea I'd a' called it a tough day. On the wings of that breeze, as I walk the avenue, I ketch the whiff of things cooking. I was abeam of a restaurant, and in the window of the restaurant is a card:

W A N T E D  
K I T C H E N   H E L P E R

"There was another card, a bigger card in the window:

C O A S T E R C A P T A I N  
C O M E I N A N D L I S T E N  
T O O U R  
S I N G I N G W A I T R E S S ! ! !

"Kitchen helper? Not much of a billet, but I'd already learned that no shore job is ever what it looked like first. And I was hungry. Jan, but I was hungry. I went in.

"I see a good-sized clean place, with a bar to one side of the room an' a cigar counter to the other. There was a man readin' a newspaper spread out on the cigar case. The boss of course he'd be. Only the boss could be taking it so easy. I step up to the cigar case. 'That kitchen helper's job—still open?'

"He looks up from his paper. 'Still open, yes.' He gives me a lookin' over. 'What you been doing lately?' He was a pleasant, easy-going kind.

"I hear a voice singing, one of those soft, coo-ey, heart reachin' girl's voices. I faced around. Standing back to him is Mollie, though her name is something I don't know then. She has an order book and pencil in her hand waitin' a customer's order, and as she waits she keeps on singing.

"I face the boss again:

"'I've been a lumber camp cook in Oregon, a

stage coach driver in California, a fireman in a Denver apartment house, a preliminary welter-weight ring fighter in Chicago, and—but don't you think that's enough to qualify me for kitchen helper?"

"‘You'll do, I guess,’ says the boss. ‘I'll pay you fifteen dollars a week. Your meals go with the job, and a top floor room to sleep in.’"

"‘Fifteen a week! D'y' expect a man to live on fifteen dollars a week?"

"‘That's all I pay—with meals and a room.’"

"‘You know what you can do with that job? You can—I hear the waitress singing again:

‘And if ever I should meet that lad  
I'll be his own dear br-i-i-de,  
And he'll——’

"‘I'm movin' away from the cigar counter when I come face to face with Mollie. I look at her and she looks at me and it's all off. I turn to the man behind the counter.

"‘I'll go yuh!’ I says. ‘Where's your kitchen?"

Six weeks later we're married. With what I was gettin', Mollie of course had to stay workin'."

"And why wouldn't I, Captain? What would I



be doing home all day, Captain, a big strong girl like me? Have no fear, Jackie, when it is home I should be, then home I will be, striving to make of that home a place fit for you to come to after your day's work. Till then we will work together for it. Am I right, Captain?"

"You are," said Jan heartily. "And you two fell in love from the beginnin'?"

"And me without even guessin' she was takin' a second notice of me, Jan. That right, Mollie?"

"It was more than notice I took of you, Jackie. An upstanding, well-made lad, was my thought, with fine broad shoulders—so I thought when first I noticed you. Before ever I had seen a sight of your dear face that was, and you taking to the boss. And when you all but bumped into me turning about and your brown eyes looked into mine! Dear God, the joy and the fright of it! There was a terrible fire in his eyes at first, Captain."

"Not when I looked at you, Mollie."

"No, dear. You were all gentleness then, and the heart within me leaped like a salmon in the river."

"There, Jan! And people say I'm scrappy." He nodded mischievously at Mollie. "Tell Jan what the others said of me?"

“‘He has a temper that one,’ said they. ‘He won’t last three days with that quarrelsome cook in the kitchen.’”

“And what did you tell ’em, Mollie? Get this, Jan.”

“A temper, no doubt, if nagging ones do force him,” I said, “but never a thought of evil in him, and deep within him is gentleness and kindness.”

“God love you, girl.” Mollie was rosy and blue eyed, one who blushed easily. “When your own wife thinks that of you, I should worry what a gang of kitchen scavengers think of me, hah, Jan? Maybe I used to be too scrappy at that. Maybe I still shoot up into the wind too quick. But no more. I got a good balance rudder now, Jan, and steady on the course is the word from now on. That right, Mollie? You bet! But that’s enough about us two for now—how about yourself, Jan? What you doin’ in Boston right now? What was it you wrote you had in mind for me?”

“I bought a fine vessel, Jack, and I’m havin’ her overhauled. She’ll be ready for sea in another ten days. I want you to go master of her—a fine vessel. And you, too, Mrs. Hoey—you have a look at her. There’s a fine big cabin in her. You go a trip in her with Jack and you won’t be comin’

back to live in a stuffy little flat ashore in a hurry. What d' you say, Jack?"

"You're a good friend, Jan, to think of me after all this time."

"You'll take her, Jack?"

"You betcher, only I'll have to give the steamboat people time to get a man in my place."

"That oughtn't to take long."

"It oughtn't to, no. They made a barkeep of me by takin' off my kitchen dungarees and puttin' a white jacket an' apron on me. Another one oughtn't be hard to make—there must be plenty of white jackets an' aprons layin' around. You'll see me, don't worry, hoppin' down aboard just as soon as the steamboat people can get somebody in my place. But what else about yourself? Where you bunkin'?"

"I got a room on Mellows Street. A brick rooming house. A man named Goles runs it."

"Goles? On Mellows Street? What a fine joint you're in! They killed a man in that place one time, and everybody believes Goles did it, though it couldn't be proved on him."

"I thought there was something wrong with him. He acts like a crazy man sometimes. Too much booze, is it?"

"Booze? Him? He's a hoppie."

"A what?"

"A hoppie. Hoptoad. Drug addict. A cokie. He takes cocaine. And makes a good livin', they say, sellin' it—mostly to street walkers. Keep a bright lookout for him. The tango dancer in this place upstairs, the one I beat up one day, rooms there I think. A fine gang—look out for all of 'em, 'specially Goles."

"Him? Why, he'd run from a woolly dog, Jack."

"Don't make that mistake about him, Jan. He may be a born kiyi, but when he's got a shot o' coke into him—they can be like tigers with that stuff in 'em. You watch out for him, boy, when he's got a shot o' coke in him. Well, Mollie, what do y' say? Better be gettin' along to the boat, had we? She don't put out till nine o'clock, Jan, but Mollie and me're supposed to be aboard by six to look after our little preambles of work. What d' y' say, walk down aboard, will you, Jan?"

Jan saw them aboard and came away. What a lucky man—a real woman for a wife, the pair of them together always—even in their work!

Jan felt more lonesome than ever. He bought

an evening paper to see what the theaters offered in the way of amusement.

It was two hours too early to take in a theater, and it wasn't the sort of weather for a man to be sitting out in any park: he felt averse to going back to his room, but he would have to pass the time somehow to the theater hour. He decided at last to go to his room.

It was dark when he reached the house. The lights in the pool-room were already lit. Very quietly he let himself in through the front door. The hall lights were lit. He paused inside the front door. The little cricket stool was in the corner of the front hall—where she had left it, of course, after making her rounds. He stared at the gas jet which he had lit for her that evening. He peered back through the hall to the kitchen. All was dark there.

He crept up the stairs. A light was shining out over the transom of what he now felt certain was her room.

His mind reverted to that scene with her in his room that afternoon. The sympathy that had shown in her eyes! "What a pity!" she had said. A bookful of words in the way she said it.

He had a longing to see her again. He had a

daring thought of knocking on her door. He could think of something to say about fresh water in the wash pitcher, or the towels—anything at all. She might— A deed of charity it would be, and—who knows? She might, she who was so gentle and kindly, she might invite him to come and sit down.

But what was the use? What young girl like her would want a widowed man with a growing boy? To be bothering her was like taking advantage of the fact that he was paying rent for a room in the house of her uncle or cousin or whatever relation Goles was to her. He let himself into his room.

Within her own room at that moment, Lena Goles was thinking of Jan Tingloff and her husband. In all kindness and innocence, with never a thought of intriguing his interest, she had offered the coaster captain a cup of coffee that first morning after his coming to the house. She did nourish a hope that he would take the coffee as a symbol of her gratefulness; but the impulse to offer him the coffee was born of no expectation of any return, spiritual or otherwise, from him. The sight of that kindly, lonely man going out into the street on a cold morning without his breakfast had stirred her pity.

He had had his cup of coffee, and to her, so long starved of the briefest encouraging word for laborious work well done, his appreciation was an emotional refreshment.

She was making coffee next morning, and, intending the same small kindness to Jan, she had her ear alert for the sound of his step descending the stairs to go to his work.

She heard a step in the hall outside the kitchen door. She whirled quickly.

It was her husband's step. He was coming out of his room.

She was conscious of no evil intent, and yet her husband's entrance into the kitchen disconcerted her. The thought that her sudden confusion had not escaped his glance served to increase her confusion.

"Early morning coffee again? I guess I will have an early cup too." His voice and manner were surprisingly pleasant. "That is, if you're not saving it for somebody else." He added the last clause in the most casual tone of voice, as if the thought had just come to him.

She knew him too well now to believe that his remark was altogether casual. Not since the early days of their marriage had he come into the kitchen



so early of a morning; not for many weeks had he come from his room so early; he was no wastrel of time or energy; he never played except for profit: What was he up for now?

She made no response to his remark.

He chose to misinterpret her silence: "What's the matter? Anything wrong with what I said?"

"Nothing wrong? I was intending a cup of coffee for Captain Tingloff, as you probably guessed. But you can have it, and I will make another for him."

"Oh no, no, no, I won't take it. Keep it for him."

He showed his fine upper teeth in a wide smile, which did not dissipate her distrust. His manner was too gracious to be honestly meant. As if she were too stupid to see through him by now!

She replied coldly: "Thanks. You're so nice this morning." She waited, commanding her nerves as best she could, for what would come next.

"I know you're surprised. You will never give me credit, will you, for meaning well by you? Not even when I go out of my way to please you. Aim to please, as you must know by this time, is my real motto. You wore the manner of one being caught in doing something wrong. I see nothing

wrong in giving Captain Tingloff a cup of coffee. I think it is perfectly proper for you to give him a cup of coffee mornings. Why not? He is a good paying lodger. We might as well, both of us, be pleasant to good lodgers. If we're not, where is our living? You agree with me? Very well, don't. I was, possibly, too quick-tempered with him that first day, and perhaps that top-floor chap was too familiar with you. I may tell him so some time—when it pleases me to." A smile enveloped the qualifying phrase.

She was placing a cup of coffee on the table before him.

"No, no coffee for me now. Save it for the strong-armed sailor. You can bring me mine in my room as usual."

She was a trusting child at heart. For all her disillusioning experiences with him, a native innocence and trust would continue to bob up in her. Not since the early days of their married life had he made so long a speech to her—that is, in his pleasant manner. Her faith, in some moods, was unquenchable. Was he growing penitent at last? It was a tenet of her native religious belief that no soul is beyond reclaim. A protest against her se-

vere judgment of him was already stirring within her.

"I was perhaps a little nasty," she said.

"That's all right." He had paused at the kitchen door. "Some day you will understand me better and then we shall get along together. You can go as far as you like with your sailorman." Smiling evilly, he left her.

She closed the door behind him. She feared the tears would come, and she wished no one to see her in tears. He had given hints of that depraved side of him before this. At first she had been too innocent to understand fully what he was hinting at; she only knew in those earlier days that beneath his words was a meaning too deep for her small brain to grasp. She came in time to understand a part, never more than a part, of some of his vile veiled phrases.

This last pronouncement, flung with a leer over his shoulder as he went through the kitchen door, was merely one more proof that she had his full leave to go to the devil if she cared to. On this morning, by naming a partner for her sin, he had merely been more specific.

For some horrible reason of his own, he wished to push her over the brink of utter evil. She could

withstand his pressure now, as she had in the past, but what a great pity he had to smirch the whiteness of every thought she had had of the honest, innocent sailor! He was poisoning what promised to be a real friendship, an innocent consolation to her in these woeful days; a friendship that also might have been an alleviation to a good and lonesome man.

She shut the door into the hallway more tightly. Captain Tingloff might take it into his head to look in on her in the kitchen on his way out, and she shrank from facing him so soon after her husband's vile implication.

It was already past the sailor's time to be on his way to work, and she had not heard him go. She waited another while. Not hearing his steps, she decided that he must have slipped out while she was preoccupied with her reflections. She prepared her husband's coffee; and so it happened that Jan, after all his delays over his shaving and washing up, was at the front door as she came out of the kitchen with Goles's coffee and cream puff.

She knew that she should have stopped to offer some sort of explanation for failing him in that cup of coffee which she knew he would be hoping for, which she had given him good reason to be-

lieve would be waiting there for him on any and every morning he chose to look in for it; but also she feared that the shame flowing out of her husband's invitation would show in her face, and so, with only a hasty, unsmiling nod to him, she passed into Gole's room.

That had happened on his third morning in the house, and she was now in her room on the evening of the eighth day. During the days and nights in between she had been avoiding him. There were times when, seeing him enter or leave his room, she had been tempted to come out of hiding and speak to him, but she had resisted. She could not resist lingering in his room. That afternoon's meeting had been a disturbing one for her. She had been terribly tempted to explain why she had not been offering him a cup of morning coffee after her own voluntary invitation, but she could think of no explanation that would not place her husband in a bad light. The grip of ancestral customs does not slacken easily: Cruelties and infidelities in a husband do not excuse lack of loyalty in a wife,—that was her creed by birthright; and yet, so averse was she to being misunderstood by the sailor, that she had in mind to offer some little white lie by way of explaining her avoidance of him. But she

could think of no white lie while he was looking at her.

And then had come the sudden revelation that his wife was dead.

In that first rush of her sympathy for him she had forgotten all about herself and her explanation; her mind had room only for the thought that he was a lonely, bereft man.

Only that afternoon that was; and since then she had been thinking of little but the sailor and his doings in the house. The first sight of the photographs on his dresser had led her to believe that the young woman was his wife, and a married man to her meant always a man for whom no other woman could hold any warmer feeling than friendship.

His obvious interest in herself that morning in the kitchen was no more than the kindly pity of the kindly man he was for a friendless, overworked drudge—so she interpreted it at the moment; then suddenly came this knowledge that he was not married, that his wife was dead. In this new light she saw that something stronger than the casual interest of a naturally kindly man in a drab slavey lay behind his interest. She had noted that his keen eyes were scanning her left hand, and in blistering mem-

ory of the scene when her husband had torn the marriage ring from her finger, she had hurriedly covered that hand. She thought to tell him then that the absence of a ring meant nothing, that she was Goles's wife despite that; but reading, as she had read in his blazing eyes, his contempt for Goles and all his kind at the front hall door on the first morning, she had been too ashamed to admit her relationship to him.

In so concealing her marriage, even though with never a thought of harm to him, she saw—saw it now—that she had done wrong to the sailor. He was a free man, free to woo where fancy led him, and she had given him all the reason in the world to think her a free woman. She had kept her eyes hidden from him that afternoon in his room after he had told her that his wife was dead, but he saw no reason to be hiding anything. There was no misreading that look of his.

What further use in her to try to conceal from herself the meaning of his interest in her? It had radiated from him that morning in the kitchen; even her callous husband had become aware of it. And—she might as well face the thought—she had been hungry for his good opinion, even when she thought him married.



She contrasted the flashy, confident, pretentious ways of the man who had wooed and won her with the hesitating, awkward ways of the coaster captain. She felt that she understood the sailor as her husband never could. To sacrifice the friendship of such a man merely that a creature like Goles should have no occasion for an evil thought—was it right? Goles would always nourish some evil thought or other.

It was a monstrous situation. But what could she do? She might get a divorce. What a bitter life, that she could, after so short a term, be entertaining the thought of a divorce! Yet, she was entertaining it, as she was also the thought of going back home to face her aunt's sniff, the sneering contempt of a community wherein half the young women would have themselves jumped at the chance of marrying the dashing Goles.

She might be able to bring herself even to returning home. But would that make for her ultimate peace of mind, not to speak of happiness? The coaster captain's native standards—he had no need to tell her, she knew what they were—were pretty much the same as her own; and no sordid period of living had ever forced him to lower those standards; a loving, good woman for wife,

his boy and mother to love—these he had. Grief he had known, but not ugly disillusion, never the corroding influence of evil living.

Lena Goles was capable of instantaneous, momentous decisions. Such a decision had she made when, defying her aunt, she had eloped with Goles. She was making one now; she owed Goles nothing more. She had been a loyal wife to him, had overlooked a hundred brutalities. The limit of endurance was not far away. Let her stay much longer in that horrible house and only irreparable disaster could come to her, disaster to soul and body.

And there was the coaster captain!

She counted her money. Almost three dollars—enough for a room for the night in some cheap hotel, a telegram to Lawyer Walker to come and take her home, a meal or two next day while waiting. “When you want me, send for me,” he had said. She knew now that he understood what she then had been too innocent to understand, even if he had tried to explain it to her.

It was a pitiful ending to such a defiant beginning; but so it was. She had brought it on herself; no use crying over her fortune.

She set about packing her poor little things in her suit case, and as she packed, came a final

thought of Jan Tingloff. If he knew what she intended doing and why, he would have pity for her, great pity. But there it would end. He would never bring a divorced woman home to his mother. He did not have to tell her that. She knew it.

It was settled. She snapped down the cover of her suit case.

Her suit case packed, Lena Goles wasted no further minutes in meditation. She was terribly tempted to knock on the sailor's door and say good-by to him. The dread of giving him pain, of having to explain why she was leaving, withheld her.

She raised the shade of her window to see if the sidewalk was free from loungers from the pool-room. It was clear. She turned off her room light.

She was about to open the door of her room when she heard a light step and a blithe whistle descending from the floor above. She knew the step; she knew the whistle. It was Goldie, and the jaunty tune of her whistle was notice to the world that she was in good fettle.

Lena mounted a chair and looked through her transom. She could see that Goldie had bedecked

herself for battle. Her finest raiment was on her back, on lips and cheeks her most alluring tints; on eyebrows her most delicate pencilings. Her cutest hat topped her hennaed locks.

Without ceasing her cheerful whistle, Goldie slowed down her jaunty step as she came abreast of Tingloff's door. Her head was bent backward over her shoulder, as if fearful of interruption from Lena's room.

After her hours of melancholy introspection, it was a relief to Lena to be doing something in a physical way. She stepped down from her chair, burst into the hall, and leaped toward Goldie, who scuttled down the stairs before her, thumbing her nose as she went.

Lena returned to her room. She heard the front door closing behind Goldie. She picked up her suit case and peered through the street window of her room until Goldie would be out of the way. She saw the girl pass down the steps, make as if to walk up the street, halt, glance toward the basement and descend into it. Lena, cautiously opening the window and glancing down, saw that Goles had summoned her from the pool-room doorway. The pair went inside.

Lena was about to leave the window when she

saw Jan coming through the front door. With her attention centered on Goldie, she had not heard him leave his room; even so he must have stepped out almost noiselessly. The thought gave her a fresh misery; he had guessed that she was avoiding him, and he was carefully trying not to get in her way.

He stood at the bottom step and drew in three or four great breaths, at the same time taking in with a seamanlike glance what the rooftops would allow him of the sweep of the sky. He sniffed the cool air.

He had a newspaper in his hand. He leaned over the side railing of the steps, and by the light which flared out from the pool-room scanned one page of it—the amusement page, as Lena could see from the heavy advertising type.

The previous two nights he had gone out at about the same hour, and had not come back until near midnight. He must have been unbearably lonely; an unconcealed air of depression was over him now. He put his finger at one spot on the theatrical page, held it lower to read it better, folded it up, thrust it into his ulster pocket. As he stepped down onto the sidewalk Goldie came out of the basement, calling out:

“Hullo, Cap! How ’re yuh to-night?”

He lifted the forepart of his hard hat in his grave way. "I'm fine. How are you?"

"I'm up to form. Goin' to rain?"

"M-m— fog, I think—not till later, though." He was about to pass up on the street when she laid her hand on his arm.

"Say, Cap, what's your hurry? Mr. Goles wants to see you."

"What about?"

"He told me to say that your second week's rent was due."

"So it is. I 'most forgot. I suppose I might 's well pay him now."

Lena saw Goldie follow him into the pool-room. Without stopping to lower her window she raced down from her room, creeping down the basement back stairs to where she could look into the pool-room. There was no light in the basement hall except what shone into it from the pool-room, and a thin shaft from the partly open back room door. In between, was all shadow in the hall. Lena took her station at the foot of the shaded back stairs.

She saw Jan take a bill from a wallet that was distended with other bills. He strapped up the wallet and set it back inside his inner coat pocket.

Goldie was standing on her toes to peek over his

shoulder. Goles was standing in his usual place behind the counter. She saw Goldie, over Jan's shoulder, and as if answering a signal, nod meaningly to Goles, swing herself in front of Jan, playfully pat his chest.

"Goin' to a show, was yuh, Cap?"

"I was thinkin' of it."

"I don't notice yuh askin' anybody to go with yuh?"

Jan's glance of puzzlement melted into one of curiosity; then into a little smile of tolerance, pity. "I don't think you'd care much for the show I was goin' to. I was goin' to a movie."

"How d' you know I wouldn't? I could like any show with you, Cap. Say, Cap, but you must be draggin' down good money in your business?"

"I make a fair livin' out of it."

"I should say so! And there's tin horns around here that if they had half your wad we'd have to ring in the fire alarm to put them out—they'd feel themselves such warm rags. But you carry your roll around as if it was a bunch of waste paper. Say, Cap, what d' y' say to loosenin' up? How about buyin' a girl a glass of—" she winked sportively.

"Glass of what?"



"Why—ginger ale." She poked him on the chest. "Caught yuh then, didn't I? Thought I was goin' to say something stronger, didn't yuh? But I don't care for the hard stuff. I was kiddin' you that other time. I'm dyin' for a drink o' soft stuff now. And I know y'ain't any hinger."

"How do you know?"

"Oh, don't I though! Leave it to me to pick out a sport from a piker!"

"But I'm no sport."

"You could be if you wanted to be. An' I know y'ain't any hinger. What d' y' say—a drink o' ginger ale?"

"Is that all? You're lettin' me out cheap. Mr. Goles, will you let Miss Brown have what she wants?"

"What Miss Brown wants?" Goldie looked into his eyes. "How about what you want, Cap? Not goin' to let a lady drink alone, are yuh, Cap? Course not!" She turned to Goles. "Two ginger ales, Harry. Two." She held up the forefinger of each hand.

"Two ginger ales! I got it!" He also held up the forefinger of each hand. He slowly crooked the left one. "Better bring it to you in the back room, hadn't I?"

Lena saw the girl lead the half-reluctant but polite coaster captain through the pool-room to the back room. Goles came out from behind his counter, and Lena scurried back up to the top of the back stairs. He came into the hall, opened the hidden closet in the front wall. He had one empty glass in his hand. She knew that all the ginger ale which he kept on hand was in cases at the end of the counter in the pool-room. From out of the locker he took a small bottle, and from the bottle poured something into the glass.

He passed back to the pool-room with his fingers encircling the bottom of one glass. Lena ran far enough down the stairs to see him fill that glass and another entirely empty one with ginger ale. She waited until she saw him go into the back room with the two filled glasses.

She went slowly upstairs to her own room, to think out what she could do about it.

She had long known that for one purpose and another her husband had been inveigling simple, silly men into that back room. Sometimes it was Goldie who aided; sometimes it was some other girl. Of late Goldie had been the favorite medium. Sometimes the men had finished the night in a room upstairs. In the early days, over his

morning coffee, Goles had a habit of recounting with gusto the details of some bit of trickery of the night before. He seemed to get glee out of shocking her. Once one of these simple men had fallen from a room into the alley on the side of the house—so Goles had said to the investigating police—and been killed. The police had investigated him. His cleverness and ingenuity had brought him clear of punishment.

She shrank before the prospect of what would happen to herself if she interfered with what was probably going on downstairs now. She remembered her first interruption of the bedevilment and attempted fleecing of one poor silly man. “Upstairs is your place. Never let me see you down here unless I send for you,” her husband had warned her.

Twice again she had interfered, and each time been beaten up by her husband. “You try that once more,” he had said coldly after the second beating—“just once more, and you’ll let yourself in for more than a beating. I’ve warned you, remember.” She had no doubt that some day he would beat her to death. More than once before this she had said to herself that she might as well be dead as to live on as she was. And now she was

leaving him anyway, and she might be able to escape from the house before he could get a good chance at her. He would probably wait until the outsider was gone for the night before venting his fury on her.

Suppose harm did come to her—what great loss? Of what use was she in the world? Downstairs was a real man, one worth helping.

She jumped up from the edge of her bed and once more hurried downstairs. The rapid movement increased her resolution, but at the foot of the basement stairs the reaction set in. She halted to whip up her courage; went forward again.

She peeked into the pool-room. Goles was illustrating a fancy shot on the table for the admiring onlookers. He was expert at both pool and billiards. She whisked through the dark hall to the door of the rear room. The door was ajar. She peeked in there.

The door between the back room and the pool-room was closed. She knew of the nightly custom to close that door and so shut out the pool-room habitués from seeing too much of what might be going on in back; but the door was rarely closed so early.

The back room stalls or booths were each fitted

up with a narrow table and a bench each side of the table. In the nearest stall, sitting with her back to the hall door, was Goldie. Across the table on the other bench was the coaster captain. Two glasses stood between them. They were both empty.

Jan's head was sagging down onto one shoulder. Goldie was leaning across the narrow table, her face close to his, as if to see how far gone he was.

Lena's fears left her. She rushed into the room, grasped the girl by the shoulder, whirled her up to her feet.

"Didn't I tell you to let him alone?" Her voice to herself sounded like some strange woman's.

Goldie was startled, but not overpowered. She was on her own stamping ground. "Huh! Want him for yuhself, do yuh?"

The shameful insinuation almost intimidated Lena. It was the sort of thing she dreaded the sailor to hear. She faced him fearfully; but he was too far gone to comprehend exactly what was happening. He was staring in bewilderment from Goldie to Lena. He waved a hand before his eyes as if to brush aside some intervening film, and stared at Lena again. A gleam of further bewilderment shone in his dulled eyes as he stared at

her. He heaved himself slowly onto his feet. He stood with body swaying, head wobbling.

He raised his hand to lift his hat. Finding no hat on his head to lift, he looked around him, saw his hat on the table. He took hold of it, as if wishing to salute the strange lady with it, but not knowing just how to do it.

“Don’t you know me, Captain Tingloff?” Lena’s voice was now pitched naturally.

He recognized the voice, made an attempt to say so. His tongue was too thick for speech. He nodded that he knew her, stumbled away from the end of the bench and waved her to a seat on it. He said something, obviously an invitation to sit down; but his voice was still a mumble of meaningless words.

“Come with me, Captain, please.” Lena took his hat from him—he didn’t seem to know what to do with it—seized one of his hands.

Goldie seized the other hand. “But yuh won’t go with her, will yuh, dearie? She can’t have yuh, can she, Cap?” She laid his hand against her cheek.

Jan drew his hand from Goldie, rubbed it across his forehead, pulled himself together for a tremendous effort of speech, and got out:

"S'thin' wrong wish me. Whash ish?"

Lena looked into his eyes. "You poor innocent man! They have poisoned you. Come. And you, keep away from him, you! Keep away, I say. If anything happens to him from this, I'll have the police in—not to-morrow or the day after, but to-night. Come, Captain, please, with me."

She led him into the hall and up the stairs.

The repulsed but not yet defeated Goldie followed them. She saw Lena lead him to his room, open the door, close it, lock it.

Goldie rushed down to the pool-room. "Harry! O Harry! " Quick!"

He came to her, chalking his cue leisurely as he came.

"Sh-h— Harry—she's grabbed him off me!"

"What! How?"

In a few vivid phrases she told him what had happened. "She's got him in his room now."

He listened calmly. "That's all right. Let 'em stay there."

"But she's got him with the door locked!"

"Door locked? Good! All the better!" A cold glint shone from his staring eyes.

"Ain't yuh goin' up?"

"Not yet. Give 'em time, give 'em time."



He stepped into the hall, beyond the bar of light from the pool-room. From a little flat bottle he poured a white powder onto the back of his hand. "Have a shot?"

"No, I don't want a shot. I ain't come to that yet."

"No? Stick around here and you will. They all do in time." He sniffed it into his nostrils, drawing it in with quick, convulsive breaths: "M-m—but that revives a man! Now look here—don't bust in too early. Looks as if I'll get the goods on her at last. They don't any of them fool Harry Goles long. I thought from that second morning that she was gone on him. Go on up now and listen. Keep tabs on them. Don't get excited. I'll be there, ready for them both when the time comes."

Lena's first act was to get Tingloff safely away from Goldie. Then, waiting until Goldie ran below, she had run to the kitchen, filled a cup from the hot water faucet, dropped some dry mustard into the cup, and hurried back to her patient. She held the cup to his lips. "Drink this!" she said.

Jan was rolling from side to side on the bed. His brain was clearing, but his stomach was griping

him like a burning hand. He gulped down the mixture without even a glance at it. Soon nausea uncontrollable was taking hold of him. He wanted to vomit, but his shame in her presence was too great. The agony was overpowering him. "You poor boy, don't mind me." She held the slopjar up to him. "Here!" she urged.

His tortured stomach was allowed relief.

While he retched, she held his head with her free hand. When he had done, she soaked a towel in the cold water of the room pitcher, bathed his face and forehead. She continued bathing his face and forehead until, with a grateful sigh, he signed that he wanted to sit up.

"Feel better?"

He nodded.

"Sit here now." She pressed him into a chair, and with a moistened towel wiped away the tears which had been forced from his eyes, the cold sweat which beaded his brow. She squeezed out and re-dampened the towel, with infinite tenderness washed and dried his face all over again.

"You feel better now?"

"I feel better."

"That's good. I'll be leaving you. And you must—" They had been talking in whispers, but

at this point her voice trailed off into a husky cough. When she spoke again her voice was under control. "And you—sh-h-h—listen!"

She opened the door, thrust her head out to listen, turned back to say—hurriedly:

"You mustn't stay in this place after to-night."

"Why not?"

"It is no place for you."

"And is it for you?"

"For me? No—nor for any woman. But I'm talking about you. To-morrow morning—don't say a word downstairs—to-morrow morning take your bag and walk out. To-night would be better, if you were feeling well."

"And what will become of you?"

"Nothing will become of me, no more than before."

"That man will beat you."

"Beat me? If he does no more than beat me! Good night."

She had added the good night hastily. He stood up to respond with his "Good night," but only the blank closed door was there.

A faint, hot nausea still troubled him. He picked up his "Days of Chivalry" to help forget it in reading. He soon forgot the nausea; but he

could not read. He laid down the book to meditate on what had happened to him, and on her part in it.

"I wonder," he mused, "if that brute does beat her? What a brave one she is!"

He felt of his forehead where her hand had been supporting him—her cooling hand, smooth and firm in spite of all her coarse labor.

That brute beating her!

He might leave the place in the morning, yes, but not until he had a reckoning with Goles and a serious talk with her.

His stomach was not yet as right as it should be. He decided that he was better off in bed. He had the key in the lock and was about to turn it, but did not turn it.

He heard the sound of breathing. He jammed his ear against the crack in the door frame: it was the heavy breathing of a person under stress; that and the heavy muffled stamp of feet, the echo of suppressed voices. His head was clear enough now.

A high tone of Goles's voice reached him. The padded, guarded scuffling of feet, the echo of somebody speaking but trying not to speak loud, a half-suppressed sob. He stepped to the washstand and

poured out a glass of water. He took that in one gulp. It was cold and bracing to his fevered stomach. He stepped to the door, turned the knob carefully, drew the door cautiously to him, peeked out. His eyes were not yet what they might be, but under the usual dim light of the hall he got sight of her white face.

Goles had her against the rail of the stairs which led above, one hand to her throat, the other in her hair, which hung tumbled and disordered around her neck and face and half-bare shoulders. He was holding her against the stairs while he choked and mauled her.

"Don't you try to tell me any story like that!" His voice was still pitched low. "You gave in at last. Own up. Own up."

"No, no! No, no!"

"You did! You lie—you did! Admit it!"

"Don't say that—no, no, don't—of him or me. I'm not that kind. I may be so if I stay longer with you, but I'm not that yet! and he's not that kind of a man."

"No? And you an hour in his room with the door closed? Come on—own up, confess, didn't you? Say yes."

"No, no!"

“You lie, you——”

He shouted the terrible word. His fingers gripped her throat and hair afresh; he knocked her head against the stairs. He yanked her to him and, stepping backward, began to drag her through the hall toward the stairs leading below.

Goles was back to Jan, and over Goles’s shoulder Jan’s glance caught hers. It was a glance of horror, rather than of appeal. Jan was wide awake now. That horrible accusation was the medicine which drove from his system the last effects of the knockout drops.

He leaped toward Goles, reached over the man’s shoulders, seized his hands. With thumb and forefinger to each of Goles’s hands, he squeezed. Goles snarled, but held onto Lena’s throat and hair. Jan clamped fingers and thumbs, the same that could easily press a walnut to fragments, and squeezed. He continued to squeeze. Goles’s knuckles began to crack. He snarled like some half-baited brute. His grip on her throat and hair loosened.

Jan shifted his grip to Goles’s forearms. With a slow, irresistible pressure he forced the resisting arms to the man’s side. There he pinned them, Goles fighting futilely to wrench himself loose.

Jan shifted his grip to Goles’s elbows; jammed

the man's elbows into the waist. Holding him securely so, he lifted him clear of the hall floor and carried him to the head of the stairs. He tossed Goles onto one of his raised knees, set the knee carefully below the small of Goles's back, thrust with the knee and both arms together.

Goles fetched up more than half-way down the stairs, bounced and rolled the rest of the way to the hall below, all but bowling over Goldie, who had been listening at the foot of the stairs.

Goles found his feet, ran back up a step or two, shook his fist, shrieked:

"No man ever beat me up and got away with it! You wait there! Just wait there! Wait!"

"Watch 'em, you!" he shouted to Goldie, and ran down the basement stairs.

Jan came back to Lena.

She was sitting on the hall floor, her back against the wall. She was thoroughly spent; but stirred herself, hastily arranging her torn waist to cover her half-bare shoulders, when she saw him returning.

He stood before her. "That man is bad. Crazy. He was crazy that first morning I ever saw him, that time he bawled me out for helping you. He



must've been crazy. Some day he will kill you. Why don't you leave here?"

Jan had thought to find her in tears. She was dry-eyed and calm. Too calm, he thought, when she made no response.

"Where is he gone to?" he asked.

"To get his pistol, probably." A great listlessness had seized her. Goles had called her by that vile name, and he had heard.

"And will he shoot?"

"He did—once before. And he may shoot you now. You had better get out while there is still time."

Jan got down on one knee beside her. "And mightn't he shoot you, too?"

She raised her head. "He promised me he would more than once. He may now, but I don't much care now."

"You don't care? That's no way to talk! Come. You mustn't stay here." He had put an arm under her shoulder. "Come."

"No, no! No, no! You go along yourself."

"You've got to go, too."

"I'll go, but it mustn't be with you."

"Not with me? Don't you trust me?"

"I would trust you any time for any thing, but I must go from here alone."

He put his other arm under her, and lifted her to her feet. "Come. I will take you out of here."

"To where?"

"To my mother." Like an inspiration it had come to him. He repeated: "I will take you to my mother."

Her inertia disappeared. She lifted her head, a touch of color flushed her cheeks, her eyes glowed.

She shot Jan a glance that thrilled him. Almost instantly her body sagged again. The glow faded as quickly as it had come.

"No, I can't. I must not leave here with you."

He was puzzled: "Why not?"

"I'm married."

"Married! Somebody's wife! You mean—? Not——"

She raised her head, their eyes met, the numbing revelation, descended upon him. "His wife? What a pity, what a pity! That man's wife! You poor, poor child!"

She fixed her eyes on him. "You are too good a man to suffer on my account. Go before it is

too late." She was standing firmly on her feet now.

"Me go? And let him take it out on you!"

"You must go! You must! You— It's too late!"

"Too late? Why?"

"The front door is cut off. Hear him—talking to that girl on the floor below?"

Jan listened, heard the low voices.

"There—see that!" It was the light below suddenly turned off. "Hear that!" It was the creaking of the stairs under some one's cautious feet. "He is creeping up in the dark."

"We can put out lights, too." Jan reached up and turned off the hall gas. "I'll go and welt him," he whispered. "I'll back my eyes against his in the dark. If I get a grip on him, a dozen pistols won't save him."

"No, no, no!"

"You don't want him harmed?"

"Harm to him would be nothing. He is a beast, but you—there are people who love you! Your brave, strong boy. Your mother." Her hand was gripping his wrist. "Come this way," she whispered.

He did not resist her. She led him into her room and locked the door.

"You will be safe here until he is calm again. When the effect of the drug wears off he is harmless. When he goes downstairs you can go out." She paused. "I shall go also—to my home folks—as soon as the way is clear."

"You can go now, and so can I."

"No, no. You will have to pass him in the hall."

"No, we won't." He groped for the bed coverings, yanked the top and bottom sheets off, twisted them tightly, knotted them at intervals. "There!" He glanced through the window on the alley way side. "It's all clear there. You can hold your weight up, of course. I'll let you down so you won't have far to drop."

He raised the window noiselessly. She stepped, crouching, onto the sill, he holding her. She took hold, first of him, then of a knot in the sheet. He rested one hand on the sill and lowered her with the other. He leaned far out the window to minimize the drop for her. Her chief impression was one of confidence in his amazing strength.

"Ready?" he called.

"Ready," she echoed calmly, from below.

"Better drop now."

She let go and landed lightly enough.

He leaned yet a bit further out of the window, called out softly:

“Watch out!”

She stepped clear, and he dropped down, lightly enough for his weight, beside her.

## V

**J**AN led the way from the alley to the street. He hurried Lena to the nearest street corner.

A taxi was ambling in their direction. He hailed it.

"You'll have to get a room somewhere for the night," he whispered to her. "Do you know a good hotel I could tell him to drive to?"

"No good hotel would take me. See—no hat, no coat, and all mussed up! I will be glad to get anywhere under cover."

He helped her into the taxi. "I want—" so there should be no mistake he clearly articulated every syllable to the taximan—"a good hotel to take a lady to. A hotel not far off."

"A lady?" He had a confidential air, the taximan, and was holding one ear low for Jan to talk into. "Wan' a good hotel? Sure thing! Jump in."

Jan sat in beside her. She was restoring order to her hair.

"That taximan," said Jan, "looked like he was tryin' not to laugh. I wonder what he saw to laugh at?"

Her stare transformed itself into a sudden soft smile. "Oh, I don't know. Sometimes these taximen think they're wiser than the rest of us."

"There was a terribly wise one drove me to your place last week." He smiled because she smiled.

The taxi in a very short time stopped. Jan peered out. It was a hotel with a wide door and a narrow door. A dim red light shone through the glass of the narrow doorway. The words

#### LADIES' ENTRANCE

were sand-blasted on the glass.

Jan peered doubtfully out at it. "It's all right," assured the cabman; he was by now opening the cab door—" 's all right. No police ever raid this place."

"Why should they raid it?" asked Jan, the taximan giving him only a stare for an answer.

"You'd better wait here till I see about a room," whispered Jan, and made his way through the wide door. A snappy-looking young fellow came from behind a high desk and took station at the low counter.

"I want a good room for a lady."

The young fellow looked at him, and beyond

him, and then at him again. "A lady? Pretty good room? Any baggage?"

"No baggage."

"No baggage? Five dollars."

Jan paid the five dollars. "Can I register for her?"

"Sure." The clerk lifted the book from the high desk and laid it open before him.

Jan wrote her name: Lena Goles, Boston.

"Can she come in by the Ladies' Entrance?"

The clerk nodded. He directed a sly, sharp glance at Jan after blotting the name. "Sure. That door there"—he pointed his pen—"leads to the Ladies' Entrance going out."

Jan moved toward the designated door. A waiter with drinks on a tray was kicking another door open before him. Through that door, as it flew open, Jan caught a glimpse of a room where sat men and women with drinks before them. The women did not look to be at all reserved in their manners. He went out to the cab with a troubled mind.

"Something wrong?" she asked, before he could speak.

"There's a room for you, and the clerk looks all right, but I don't know about it. I don't know's



you ought to stay here—" he had thrust his head inside the cab, so the cabman should not hear. "I don't think it's a nice place for a lady."

"But—" her smile was a rueful one— "I'm afraid it will have to do. Look!" She spread wide her rumpled skirt. Her eyes rolled down to indicate her torn bodice, only held decently together by two twisted hairpins. "Not even a hat," she murmured.

With her finger tips she touched the bruises on her face and the marks on her neck. "Any port in a storm, don't you men of the sea say?" Her smile had become bright and cheerful.

He gave in. He paid the cabman, waving back the change. Through the Ladies' Entrance, past the swinging doors of the drinking room and into a small lobby he led her. A bell hop came bouncing in upon them. He wore no uniform to mark him for one, but he obviously was one—a precocious-looking boy of not more than fifteen.

"This way." He was beckoning Jan with an authoritative forefinger.

"Wait. I don't know the room. I got no key yet."

"I got it," said the boy.

They followed him upstairs, where he opened

a door and turned on a light. He drew down the shades of the one window.

It was a small room; the furnishings were much worn, and the air of it smelled stale. Jan had been immensely relieved to get her even to such a poor haven, but he was growing less and less pleased with the surroundings.

The bell hop was standing in the doorway, staring at Jan. "Well," he seemed to be saying with his eyes, "what d' y' say?"—or so Jan interpreted his fixed glance.

"You wait outside," he said to the boy. "The lady might want hot water and things to clean up. The lady"—he tapped the boy confidentially on the shoulder—"tripped up and tore her clothes getting out the way of a trolley car." He handed the boy a dollar bill. "You wait outside. Understand?" He pushed the boy toward the hall.

The boy tucked the dollar away. "I'm wise, I'm wise," he whispered, winked at Jan, and closed the door.

"I got rid of that boy so 's to talk to you. I don't think you ought to stay here, not even for one night. It's not a place for a good woman."

She was standing straight and rigid in the middle of the room.

"You're good," she said, without looking at him. "Almost too good. But what sort of a place did I come from? And where can I go if I do not stay here to-night?"

"You have no folks in Boston?"

"None. My folks live in Wortham."

"Wortham? Why, that's not far from Portland!"

"Not far—a half hour on the train."

"You'll want to go to them, of course."

"I'll have to now. There's nothing else left me."

"Everything will be all right then. Here's something. You can go by the night boat to Portland. I got a married friend—remember me speaking about Jack Hoey and his wife, Mollie? She's the finest kind of a woman. Jack comes from Portland, and both got jobs now on the Portland boat. I had a bite to eat with them to-day. Their boat puts out at nine o'clock. It's now—see—" he showed the time by his watch—"most half-past eight, and the wharf is only two minutes' walk from here. Jack's wife will look after you while you're aboard. You'll be all right. I'll see you aboard with Mrs. Hoey. I'll have time to tell her and Jack about you, and you'll be safe in Portland by seven in the mornin'.

We'll go along now to the wharf."

He was holding his hat stiffly in one hand. The other hand he extended to her, saying: "Come." She took it, lifted it to her lips and burst into sobs.

A woman crying and kissing his hand, and all done so suddenly he could not stop her!—he was shocked—ashamed of himself. "Sh—sh—sh-h! You mustn't, you mustn't!"

"I will. You're one of the few men who stayed at that house who didn't look at me as if I were a street walker. And he tried his best to make me one. I fought him, and fought him, and not a soul to help me. A woman can't hold out forever. I think I would have killed myself some day—and not too far away a day. And if you had been the kind of a man that many of them are——"

"You mustn't say things like that!"

"But it is so. And you helped me to put it out of mind. There were things— oh-h!"

"It's all right now!" He was patting her hands. "You don't ever have to go back there, 'less you wish. You stop over in Portland and see my mother. Mrs. Hoey will bring you to her. She'll understand you without you sayin' a word. She brought up a dozen of us and she has grandchildren—a deckload o' grandchildren. Not much our old

grandmothers don't know about people's troubles. And now we'll have to hurry along to the boat."

Whirling open the door, he almost fell over the bell boy. "What you hangin' around here for!" he yelled. It eased his feelings to yell at the boy.

The boy hurried downstairs. "Say, but that's a new kind of an elopement for this shack!" he exploded to the clerk. "He pays for a room, they swap a bookful of kind words, and come out again. They're off to the Portland boat. He's not her husband."

"No? Well, you're not her husband, either, are yuh? Close yer yap! They gone?"

"They're gone. Out the Ladies' Entrance."

"Let 'em go. Lena Goles?" The clerk took an eraser and neatly erased the name Lena Goles, Boston. He reached into the desk drawer, took out the five-dollar bill that Jan had paid him for the room, folded it neatly with a packet of other bills in his money wallet.

"I don't know who the husky guy is," he muttered, "but if she's Hen Goles's wife, good luck to him! That coke hound never was any good."

"The steamer wharf," said Jan.

Lena followed him onto a wide area that was

planked under foot, rough roofed overhead, the whole structure being no more than a shed to protect the freight from the elements. Boxes of dry goods, cases of canned goods, a crated baby carriage, porcelain bath tubs—the last scattering pieces of a miscellaneous cargo were being hustled by sweating longshoremen on little hand trucks down a wide runway and into the afterhold of a steamer that lay tied up to the wharf.

“The *Argosy*,” said Jan. “Your boat.”

The *Argosy* was a small steamer of a common Atlantic coastwise type. She and her sister ship, the *Argonaut*, had been originally designed to carry freight only; but the route by water between Portland and Boston being a straight line and the route by rail a long, roundabout one, and the railroad people seeing no profit in night trains, the steamship company saw a chance to build up a passenger as well as a freight business; hence the alteration of the original freight boats into a semblance of passenger boats, and the installation of this night boat service between the two ports. The passenger accommodations were not extensive, but neither was the travel ever very heavy. At this time of the year travel was lighter than usual.

Arc lights were hung at intervals around the

wharf. Near the forward end of the ship one of these lights was illuminating the passengers' narrow gangplank. By way of this gangplank and a narrow deckway, Jan led Lena to the cabin entrance, thence to the restricted place that served as a lounge and smoke room on the *Argosy*. The grilled window of the purser's office looked out on this space. The purser himself was attending to business behind the grill. Lena, still somewhat bewildered, gazed fearfully about her while Jan stepped up to the grill.

"A ticket and a good room for Portland, please."

"Ticket and room. What name?"

"Mrs. Lena Goles."

The purser wrote it down, pushed a ticket and a key through the grill, saying: "Seven dollars. Room 18."

A wide staircase opening up left and right led up to what was called the saloon of the ship. There was a clock above the staircase. Jan noticed the time: Eight thirty-five.

"Most a half hour yet," he thought.

It was at this moment that Goles, peering in from the deck entrance, saw them ascending the saloon staircase. He waited until they had dis-

appeared above. The girl Goldie was with him. He motioned her to follow him to the purser's window.

"Two tickets and a room to Portland."

"What name?"

"Name? Mr. and Mrs. Henry Green."

"Room 27. Ten dollars."

"Where is it—27?"

"Starb'd side, outside. Berth deck. That's the deck above. Waist of the ship. Go through the saloon above."

Goles turned to Goldie. "I'll meet you there—Room 27." He said that aloud. In a whisper he added: "Locate their room and come back to Room 27. Go on—hurry!"

"Ten dollars," repeated the purser.

"I'll pay you, I'll pay you!" snapped Goles. He saw Goldie on her way, however, before he paid.

Except for a space inboard, which was bulkheaded in for engine and boiler up-take space, the cabin quarters of the *Argosy* took up the entire amidships of the berth deck. The saloon was a good-sized room, extending from the open deck space forward to the midship engine section. Cream painted and gold-striped rooms of light construction enclosed the saloon. Narrow passage-



ways between these rooms gave access to the midship deck. Entrance to all saloon rooms was from the deck outside.

Wide windows and two doors afforded access from the saloon to the cramped forward deck. Fore and aft passageway between engine room space and the staterooms extended from the saloon to the stern of the ship.

Heavy plush chairs were bolted to the floor of the saloon, their backs against the stateroom bulkheads. Other plush chairs were secured to the stanchions in the open spaces of the saloon floor.

An orchestra—violin, piccolo, 'cello and piano—was going full blast as Jan and Lena entered from below. A few passengers were planted in chairs listening to the music.

From an old acquaintanceship with the steamer Jan knew that the even-numbered rooms would be on the port side; and that 18 would be about amidships. He crossed the saloon, passed through a passageway, and presently was on the midship part of the berth deck space, or what on the *Argosy* passed for deck space. It was hardly more than a gangway between the staterooms and the steamer's rail.

He found Room 18, opened the door and mo-

tioned Lena to enter. She stepped inside, not yet over her bewilderment, but smiling bravely.

"I will find Jack's wife and send her to you."

Jan had been standing with one foot inside the room and one out, gazing into it to see that towels, drinking and washing water were in their places. He turned to go. She seized his hand and pressed her lips to it.

He drew it free. "You mustn't do that!"

"I can't help it."

He stared at the deck, abashed and helpless. Awkwardly he repeated his words: "I'll hunt up Jack's wife now to come and look after you. Everything will be all right then."

"You are going back to that house?"

"I got to."

"Why do you have to?"

"Why, we must 'a' been seen leavin' together by those pool-room loafers, and I got to go back and show myself and stay there to-night."

"So that they won't think we ran off together? Is that it? You shouldn't be risking your safety because of what such people think."

"I care what they think about you, even such people. Besides, I want to give him a chance to

do any settlin' up maybe he thinks he ought to have with me."

Without looking to see how she took it; and before she could stop him, in case she might wish to stop him, he went off.

Goldie emerged from the shadow of a deck ladder. She waited for the coaster captain to disappear, ran up to the room he had left and noted the number. She ran around the saloon the other side of the boat, and found 27. Goles was waiting for her, holding the door ajar.

"Say, Hen, she's pretty sweet on him all right. Kissed his hand."

"She did, eh? All good business for me. I'll get her right and him right. Before they leave the boat I'll have them both trapped." He gripped her arm. "They may never leave the boat."

"What you say?"

"You heard me."

"Lay off that stuff, Hen. You did for one man and got away with it, but you can't do it again and get away with it—not on a boat, you can't. You can't rig up an alibi so easy on a boat."

"No? Suppose I make it look like a suicide—a double suicide? The pistol found in the room with 'em?"

"No, no! God, no, Hen!—that would be rotten. You got no kick comin' if she wants to quit yuh. You want her to quit yuh, don't yuh? You been tryin' to make her quit yuh, ain't yuh?"

"She's going to quit me my way, not hers or his. And you close your face! Look here!" He yanked her through the door, closed it behind her. "Look here! Who took you in off the street when the police had their eye on you?"

"Suppose you did! That ain't this."

"See here, Kid, you know what I think of you? And what I think of her? Sure you do." From his pocket he took Lena's ring. "You can wear it now if you want to, and you know what that means."

"I don't want to. No second-hand rings for me. If yuh don't think enough of me to buy me a new one, you can—you know where you can go, I guess."

"I'll go nowhere except where I want to go myself. Harry Goles was always his own master. Now listen to me!"

Goldie had moments when justice ruled within her, but she was also an incurably comfort-loving little animal; and she never forgot for long that all women of regular habits were her natural enemies; and Lena, lately, had been her particular enemy.

"I'll keep my mouth shut. All you men—most of yuh—you're all the same. What's the use o' me tryin' to make yuh over?"

"Make men over?" Goles laughed. "If men were made over, you would have to go out of business."

"I suppose so." Her tone was of resignation. "But sometimes I wish they was made over. And women, too. I get tired of myself sometimes. It's all rotten what I'm doin', damn rotten." She took out her handkerchief. She was weeping.

"Hey, Hen?" She was wiping her eyes.

"What is it, Kid?"

"I'm awful scared o' gettin' seasick. I heard somebody say one time that champagne was a great cure for it. Hustle along to the bar an' get me a bottle o' champagne, will yuh?"

"Whatever you say, Kid. I mean, of course, if they have it."

"Of course they have it! What kind of a bar would it be an' not have champagne?"

"All right, I'll see. A pint of champagne."

"A pint? What's a pint? A quart."

The bar of the Portland boat was on the main deck aft. A waist-high service door opened into

an interior passageway. An outboard door gave access to and from the deck. A large square airport also looked out on the deck. The bar itself extended almost the length of the room on the inboard side.

Three passengers were sitting at a small table under the airport. One was relating what evidently was a funny story, and a steward with his tray was leaning over the service shelf at the inner door, when Jan peeked through the airport in search of his friend Hoey.

Hoey was just then characteristically tending to business behind the bar; that is, he was energetically shaking up something in a tall glass, timing the shaking to the meter of a little song he was humming, his roving eyes taking notice all the while of the three men under the airport.

"He's the lucky man," thought Jan, "married and happy and his wife on the same ship with him."

Hoey was placing the mixed drink on the steward's tray when Jan entered. Behind the bar was the usual mirror. Hoey made use of this mirror whenever he faced it, as he had made use of the mirror in the Maritime Restaurant, to see what might be going on behind him. He was ringing

up the cash register when he saw the reflection of Jan entering through the deck door.

He passed the steward his change, reached his hand across the bar, shouting: "Hulloh, Jannie! How are yuh? I sure never expected to see yuh goin' back home to-night."

"I'm not goin' back home, Jack."

"No? What else did y' say?" This last to a steward at the service door. "Two beers? I got yuh. In a second, Jan." He served the order and turned to Jan.

"No, it's not me who's goin' to Portland, Jack. It's a young woman, a friend of mine, and I'd like to have your wife look after her. Let me talk with her, will you, Jack?"

"The wife? Sure! A horse's neck, did y' say?" —to a waiting steward.

"A horse's neck."

"I got yuh! Now while I'm makin' it, run down the passageway like a good scout, will yuh, son, and tell my wife to come here? That's the boy—make steam."

The steward scuttled off. Hoey went at the business of making the drink; and while at it—scooping in the cracked ice, pouring in the ginger ale, slicing off the lemon rind, he harkened to

Jan's quickly-told story of the happenings at the lodging house.

"And so I brought her aboard, Jack, and she's now in her room, and I want a good woman to look after her. It 'll make her feel better, and your wife's just the woman," concluded Jan.

"You're right, boy—Mollie's the girl to make her feel at home. A bad actor, that Goles party, hah?"

"He would have killed her, I think."

"I shouldn't wonder. You, too, maybe. No tellin' what those birds will do when they load up with dope. If I was you— Hello, here's the wife!"

Mollie was smiling affectionately across the service shelf at Hoey.

"Just a minute, Mollie." Hoey put the second drink on the steward's tray, rang up the sale, gave the steward his change, motioned him on his way, gave Mollie's hand a squeeze, lifted the service shelf on its hinges to let Jan pass into the passageway.

"Jan wants to have a talk with you, Mollie. Don't forget to come back to me before you step ashore, Jan."

"I'll be back, Jack."



Jan followed Mollie into the interior of the ship. Hoey took to mopping dry the bar, which was already dry and shining enough. One thing he liked about tending bar was that he could go through the motions of much of it with his mind on far more interesting things than the work of it.

He meditated on what Jan told him until distracted by the loud chatter of the three passengers who now had their heads together over the little table under the airport. "Listen to me. I got one can beat that," one of them was shouting.

Hoey noted the anticipatory smiles already wreathing their faces. He elevated his nose, pinched it to shut out an imaginary odor, and while so pinching it caught sight of a man peering in through the glass of the airport.

It was Hoey's whimsical notion to speak of human values in terms of percentage. The idea had come to him after constant consultation of the batting averages of the big league ball players. A man's eyes were worth so many points, mouth so many; forehead, hands, set of the body, shape of the head—to each item he gave his valuation; or rather, so he would explain it to his friends or himself. Actually he usually measured a man up with a single glance.

"The eye of a mad dog lookin' around to see who he is goin' to bite next—about ought ought six for him," muttered Hoey. The peak of the man's cap, the turned-up collar, had hid all of the face except the eyes from Hoey. He set the imaginary figures down on the bar—.006.

Goles crossed the room to the bar. His peculiarly stiff-legged, rapid walk was not lost on Hoey.

"Did I see a big man come in here a minute or two ago?"

"A big man? There's a big man here now." Hoey pointed to one of the group over by the airport.

"I don't mean him. This man was standing here where I am now, back to the window, talking to you."

"Oh-h! That's right, there was." Hoey turned his own back, ostensibly to look into the cash register, actually to have a sharper look at the man's reflection in the mirror. He turned back to the man, murmuring: "Ought ought four. No, ought ought two."

"What you say?"

"I was reckonin' up a guy's battin' average—a bush-leaguer. You heard me?" Hoey grinned cheerfully at him. "What about the big man?"

"Captain Tingloff of Portland, wasn't it?"

"He didn't tell me his name."

"He's a Portland man, and I thought you would know him."

"This only my first week on this job—a lot o' Portland an' Boston people I ain't been introduced to yet, y' see."

"Where did he go?"

"Out."

"Out where?"

"Out." Hoey waved his arms in a wide way. "Out. I'm too busy to be takin' notice of where out everybody goes."

"I was standing on the deck outside all this time waiting to see him come out. I didn't see him."

"You been out there all this time?"

"Didn't I say I was?"

"You sure did, and it interested me because I been wonderin' how it looked for weather out there. It could be rainin' umbrellas and overshoes and a man in here would never know it."

A steward was tapping on the service door. "Excuse me," said Hoey, politely to Goles; and to the steward—"What's it, son?"

"Two Scotch highs."

"Two Scotch highs."

Hoey made the drinks and rang up the cash register. He lingered over the change, studying what he could see of the face in the mirror. Sending the steward on his way, he faced his man again.

"Did you say you were havin' a little somethin' to drink?"

"I didn't say."

"I know you didn't. That's only my way, part o' my job—get me?—to remind people. Sometimes people come in here and get talkin' and forget what they come in for."

"I know what I came in for."

"That's good! What was it?"

"Got some brandy?"

"Sure we got brandy."

"How much is it?"

"Two dollars."

"For how much?"

"A full-sized bottle—five to a gallon—a quart we call it."

"How much for a pint?"

"Dollar and a quarter."

"Dollar and a quarter. I'll take half a pint."

"Don't sell it by the half-pint. Pint's the smallest package, except a drink. Twenty cents a drink."

"I don't want a drink of it. I wouldn't drink the rotten stuff."

"This is good stuff—Three Star Hennessey's. Say, there's a funny thing too—" Hoey leaned over the bar and lowered his voice.

"What's funny?"

"They say he's a Frenchman."

"Who?"

"Hennessey. What d' y' know about that—Hennessey a Frenchman?"

"To hell with what he is. Haven't you any cheaper brandy?"

"Nope."

"For a bartender you're pretty fresh."

"Yep; an' sometimes when I'm off watch I'd like to take a lesson off you in politeness—take it or give it. This packet's due in to Portland at seven A.M. You say the word an' I'll go over the gang-plank with you when she docks. And up on the wharf behind a few cases of shoes or canned corn beef you an' me c'n have a nice little session."

"You might get more than you were looking for."

"I'd risk it, son, with you—behind a pile o' freight on the dock an' no cop within hearin'. Did you want some brandy?"

"A dollar and a quarter a pint?"

"Dollar 'n' a quarter, yep."

"Give me a pint, and two bottles of ginger ale."

"Small or full-sized ginger ale?"

"Small."

"Pint o' brandy, two small ginger ales. Want the corks out?"

"I'll open them."

"All right. One twenty-five an' two for a quarter—that'll make a dollar 'n' a half."

Goles hesitatingly produced a bill and laid it down on the bar.

"Two-dollar bill. One fifty out of two." Hoey rang up the amount, took out a half-dollar and spun it across the bar. He studied his man as he walked across the bar-room, opened and closed the deck door behind him.

"Ought ought two did I say?" murmured Hoey. "No, sir—ought ought ought for him, the bum! Who's he bringin' the booze to? If I got an eye in my head, that's friend Goles, an' there's rough weather ahead for Jan."

In an interior passageway Jan re-told to Mollie the story of the evening. He went into greater detail with her than with her husband. There were

no bustling stewards to distract her attention, and also she was more inquisitive than Hoey.

She asked questions. The answers stirred her wonder and pity.

Her pity moved Jan to become more confidential than was usual with him. Before he had done he had told Mollie almost his secret thoughts in the affair: what he did not tell in words he revealed by his tone and manner.

"And that's all, I guess. An' now you will look after her? And talk to her, won't you, the way you know how, to make her forget things for a while?"

The disturbed strong man's appeal stirred the very feminine Mollie profoundly.

"Indeed I will, the poor creature!"

"I knew you would. And now"—he drew out the well-worn wallet and from it abstracted some bills—"I didn't offer her money, because I knew she wouldn't take it from me; but she'll need a few things when she gets to Portland. She mustn't go home looking like she has no friends in the world. Will you take her around the shops in Portland to-morrow, and buy her a few things a woman ought to have—hat, shoes, skirt—oh, you know—things to wear? She left that house in such a hurry. Get her pretty good things—she was

used to nice things in her own home, I think.”

He passed over the bills: two tens, a twenty, a fifty. “Will that be enough for a few things till I see you again?”

“Plenty, plenty, Captain. I bought my own trousseau for less than that.”

“All right. She’s in Room 18, or didn’t I tell you? I’ll step in now and see Jack.”

He plunged back to the bar, reached his hand across the service shelf: “So long, Jack! I’ll see you when you’re back in Boston.”

“Wait a bit, Jan, what you goin’ ashore for?”

“It won’t look good for me to stay on this boat after me bringin’ her aboard—that’s in case there’s any talk later and it all comes out.”

“M-m, maybe. But here—wait. There was a bird in here a while back with starin’ eyes and a smooth dish-face with a kind of a long rubber jaw. I never did know a dish-faced party yet who was any good. And he walked kind o’ stiff-legged—like a wooden soldier about thirty years old with good teeth. He wore a big ruby ring. That your man Goles?”

“He aboard here? What brought him aboard?”

“The same reason prob’ly that brought you aboard—his wife.”



"How'd he know she came here?"

"How'd he know? D' y' s'pose you left his house with his wife an' none o' that gang o' scuttlebutt loafers you told me and Mollie about the other day not seein' you goin'? And they not havin' another peek to see where you were bound and tellin' him? Anyway, he's aboard and payin' great attention to your doin's. An' that bein' so, you better stay aboard too, don't you think? He'd prob'ly go ashore after you if you left, an' you'll be safer aboard here than ashore if he starts any rough stuff—gun play or somethin' like it."

"I don't mind his gun."

"I know that, but how about his wife with him aboard? Why, he could ketch her alone, dump her over the rail in the night and who'd know anything about it?"

"That's right—he could, couldn't he? Perhaps I had better stay aboard."

"Sure you had. I wouldn't trust that hound—here!" Hoey pulled out a drawer under the bar and displayed an automatic pistol. "Here's a gat that a fly cop slipped me. He used to come into the Maritime kitchen cold nights for a cup o' coffee when he was trailin' a gang o' harbor thieves. 'Some night there might be a party of merry yegg-

men makin' the rounds, and stick up your manager out front. A couple o' shots from you through the kitchen door might do a bit o' good,' says the fly cop, passin' me the gat. Now Goles may want to start somethin'. He's got somebody with him too."

"Who would be with him?"

"I dunno who, but he's got somebody. He got a pint o' booze—brandy—off me, an' those hoppers don't run to booze. Teetotallers nearly all of 'em. And a man don't buy brandy and ginger ale just to be sociable with a bartender, especially the kind that almost kisses a two-dollar bill before he passes it over. Better take this along with you."

Jan took the pistol, hefted it, examined it thoughtfully, finally passed it back. "No, no, I couldn't shoot him."

"You couldn't shoot him—not if he was to try to shoot you?"

"I couldn't, Jack. After all, he's the man she married. I couldn't. I didn't know he was her husband till to-night though."

"A hell of a husband he is!"

"I know, but I couldn't shoot him—not if he put a gun to my head I couldn't."

"God help him if he put a pistol to my head, and

I had one and could beat him to it!" Regretfully Hoey dropped the pistol back into the drawer.

Jan left Hoey, intending to tell Lena that Mrs. Hoey would be with her soon; but Mollie, a brisk-moving girl, had gone to Room 18, introduced herself, put one of her own hats and coats on Lena, and was leading her out while Jan was yet on his way. Jan came up behind them, thinking to say a word; and then, when so close he could have touched them, he said nothing. He was never a loquacious person, but he was now like a tonguetied man. He heard Mollie say:

"Come with me, dear. Come in where the lights are and the music, and try to forget your troubles. Forgettin' your troubles is to half-kill them in the beginnin'."

The young women were twins in age, but in her manner Mollie might have been Lena's mother. With a heartening arm around her waist, Mollie led her through one of the passageways into the saloon. Jan, summoning fresh courage, started to follow them inside. A panic seized him then: what would he say if Lena were to see him? For of course he would have to explain why he had not gone ashore, and it would be a fresh terror for Lena to learn

that her husband had trailed them to the boat and was evidently aboard for the night.

Jan, holding the deck, heard the loud and long drawn-out call of a bustling steward. It was last call to go ashore. The cast-off whistle was next blown. Leaning out over the rail he saw the long-shoremen hauling the gangplank onto the wharf. He was gazing with absent-minded though professionally automatic interest at the hustling wharf men when two ship's officers halted nearby. They were subordinate officers both—the nearer one the second deck officer, a man he knew by sight. The other, as he judged, was from the engine room force.

"Well, we're off once more," said the deck officer.

"Yes. And I'm not sure I wouldn't damn well like to be ashore myself."

"Trouble again below?"

Jan's abstraction fell from him. Their voices lowered: presently the voices rose, and he heard:

"Oh, the engines will be all right no doubt. They always have come to time when we needed 'em, and no doubt they will again. And I suppose we could, if it comes on bad, put her in somewhere along the coast—Gloucester or Newb'ryport——"

"If it stays clear weather, you mean. But suppose it grows thick?" The pair moved off.

The ship had now backed clear of the dock. She was out in the stream, turning to head down the harbor and out to sea.

Jan walked forward to watch the outer harbor lights come into view. By and by he walked aft to watch the shore lights recede.

He could feel the deck lifting slightly under him. It made him feel better, more at home—out to sea, not on land, was where he belonged. Jack Hoey the same. The pair of them should be out there, masters of their own vessels and crews, not mixed with all kinds of queer people and places ashore.

He walked toward the bar-room. Through the airport he saw Hoey shaking up some delectable drink for a waiting steward. Directly under the airport were the same three men at the little square table, still holding their glasses down to the table and each one still trying to do all the talking.

One of them must have spoken of the possibility of rough weather, because through the open airport Jan could hear them—all three shouting to be heard.

"Blowing forty miles an hour it was. And——"

"Forty miles? What's forty miles? I was one time crossin' the English Channel when——"

"English Channel! Shucks! Did y' ever cross the Bay o' Biscay in a storm? There's where it IS rough!"

"Rough?—I love it rough."

Hoey had finished mixing his drink and, with folded arms, was ruminating on the bravery of the three shouting men under the airport. He unfolded his arms, shot a half-humorous, half-sardonic glance toward the three men, and took to wiping off the bar. His keen eyes, now roving, caught sight of Jan through the airport. He grinned, and with his lips framing the words between his cupped palms, he said: "Tough sailormen they be, hah boy?"

Jan passed on to where, through the glassed-in forward bulkhead, he could see what was going on in the saloon. First, after his fashion, he took in the general scene: the orchestra, which was still playing; the wide staircase leading to the main deck below; the fat, red plush chairs placed all over the saloon, and the people sitting in them.

The details caught his eye then: a young couple on one of those Siamese chairs, the man facing aft and the girl forward, and both heads together; a

foreign woman holding a baby, the baby asleep and the woman absorbed in the music.

Mollie and Lena were still there. Mollie had been sitting beside Lena, but was now standing up to go. She patted Lena's shoulder, bent above her and spoke what Jan very well knew, without being able to hear, would be heartening words.

The deck heaved more perceptibly, not much of a heave to Jan, who had only to balance himself easily to it; but enough of a heave to cause Mollie to throw one arm around a stanchion, and Lena to grip both arms of her chair.

Jan filled his pipe; and, filling it, reflected that he must have been worried when he hadn't filled it before this.

He had been worried, much more than he let on to Hoey. He now paced back and forth from the ship's bow to the saloon. Each time he came near the wide windows he would glance through to see that Lena was still there. He would have liked to go in and sit with her, but he dreaded the having to tell that her husband was on the ship.

He paced the deck, trying to forecast what Goles would do next. He would hardly dare to go to extremes with so many people around. Surely a sensible man would not, but—he would have to

consider this, too—the man was probably out of his senses at times. What damage the man might try to do himself Jan wasted no time thinking of. Time enough to think of that when they arrived in Portland in the morning. He would hardly try to do anything out of the way while aboard ship! He would watch him sharply in Portland.

The deck was heaving more noticeably. The ship was clear of the harbor and heading on her easterly course out to sea. He leaned against a rail stanchion in casual study of the weather. It wasn't a bad sky yet, moon and stars were hardly clouded, but there was a tang of coming wind in the air. He paced the deck, his mind absorbed in the possible doings of Goles.

"Storm coming?" A passenger had paused beside him.

Jan nodded. "A little breeze o' wind—an easterly, most likely."

The passenger, seeing a man in no mood for a chat, passed on.

The man's interest in the weather caused Jan to take renewed notice of it. A wind was making, a light wind moving high up; and on its back new quick-forming clouds were riding. Flat, gauzy clouds they were, tiny clouds so far, drifting like



pieces of lace across the face of a high-swung, three-quarter moon.

The clouds bulked larger, and rapidly grew more solid to look at. They were moving at increasing speed. He followed the course of one until it blocked Polaris from his sight. His wandering eyes sought lower stars to look at—some fine shining ones should be brightening up the northern quarter at this hour of this late fall night; but already clouds had formed nearer the horizon and were shutting out old familiar sky marks.

The wind was hauling into the east. Snow? He sniffed the dampening air. Hardly cold enough for snow. If snow did come, it wouldn't last; almost surely it wouldn't last the night through, but there would be wind.

Suppose it came thick o' snow with the breeze o' wind and a hard shore under their lee!

In his own vessel, in any sailing vessel, with snow coming and a rocky shore-line under his lee he wouldn't be hanging around any lee shore for long. Clawing off shore he'd go in a hurry. Yes-sir, claw off quick! But a steamer's deck under a man's feet made a different matter of it. Give her steam and she'd come off. A great thing, steam, after all; yet not always such a sure thing. Good

canvas and sound spars were things a man could trust to, but who could say what minute a piston rod or a cylinder head would bust in an engine room? One minute all right and the next all wrong: no warning at all to them! And when they began to go, where was your steamer?

The deck above him was the boat deck, the top deck of all. Up there, almost over his head, was the ship's wheel house. It was the usual sort of pilot house on a small coast steamer, being glassed in on the front and both sides. By the screened binnacle light shining onto the compass, he could make out the head and shoulders of the helmsman at the wheel. Except for that faint compass light the interior of the wheel house was dark, though not so dark that he could not discern the dim figures of other men behind the man at the wheel. That was all right, too; there would be some one else beside the officer on watch—the captain if he felt like being there.

But what was the captain doing there now? Jan happened to know that this particular ship's captain was not given to hanging around the wheel house once the boat was out of the harbor and safe on her way into clear water. What was keeping him there? The aspect of that wheel house and the

shrouded figures within it was troubling him. He was growing nervous—he must be—he had let his pipe go out. He drew a smokeless breath on it, thrust it into his pocket.

Nervous about what? Suppose it did come to a blow? Suppose it did snow—what of it? She was a steamer, she had horse-power—why worry about a bad lee shore? That's what her steam power was for—to drive her safe off.

They had left the lightship outside Boston Harbor astern. From that lightship to the entrance to Portland Harbor was a straight course in open water. Point her nose now to the proper compass point, give her steam, and the officer on watch—if he was that kind—could go down and turn in for all the danger there was before the lights of Portland loomed ahead. Up the channel then and into her dock—what could be simpler for a steamer that didn't have to tack and beat the same as a sailing vessel against this wind?

Of course, a steamer's engines would have to be all right.

Her engines?

Jan was no lightning thinker. No brainstorm had ever upset him. A hundred thoughts had found their slow way in and out of his brain, no

disturbing thought among them until this one particular thought emerged and refused to pass quickly:

Her engines!

She had been late the morning he came to Boston in her; she had been late once since, according to water-front gossip: there was that talk he overheard between the two officers as she was pushing out of the dock to-night; she had been a second-hand steamer when taken over by the Portland Company, and that was twenty years ago.

Jan visualized Lena sitting alone in the saloon; the foreign woman and her sleeping baby; Hoey's wife Mollie. He thought of others aboard, especially the few women.

He was growing too nervous to remain still any longer. He pulled the brim of his hat more firmly over his forehead and made for the deck above. The wind had increased considerably. He found himself using both hands climbing the ladder; and there was now snow—tiny spitting flakes as yet, but snow for all that.

Clouds were plenty now, he saw from the top deck; a thick roof of clouds, no sign of a sky whatever.

A window on the lee side of the wheel house was

open for a space of two or three inches. Through this slit he saw shining brass reflecting a slant of light from the binnacle light. He moved nearer to the open window. He saw a hand reach across the path of light to a shining tube. The hand was from a coat sleeve with four gold stripes, a captain's mark of rank. The captain and the deck officers of the ship were residents of his own town of Portland and both known to Jan.

He recognized the captain's voice shouting down the speaking tube:

"What in hell's wrong down there now?"

Some answer came back. The captain hurled the speaking tube back in its sheath, and stepped impatiently back from it. Jan heard him again, now speaking to somebody in the wheel house.

"It all comes down to dollars and cents. I didn't want to leave the dock to-night. But suppose I said that to them at the office? It would be hunt another job, wouldn't it?"

"I guess that's so," responded another voice, which Jan knew for the first officer's.

"I tell you I don't like the look o' things! If she was a well-found ship, but the old wreck she is!"

"She *is* pretty well shook up. What will we do now, sir?"

"Do? What can we do but keep on? We might put into Gloucester, if things go wrong."

"If it don't get too thick?"

"Of course, if it don't get too thick. Hell!" The captain was peering through the open window. "It's thickening. I expected it, but it's hell just the same."

Jan moved away from the wheel house. "Guess I better be havin' a look around," he muttered.

To his right hand was a lifeboat; across the deck would be another lifeboat. Two more lifeboats, he knew, each settled firmly in chocks, would be also there, one to port and one to starboard, further aft. He inspected the nearest boat, feeling for its equipment in the dark. Thwarts were in place, oars where they should be. All right. There was a keg and a small box. Fresh water in the keg—perhaps. Compressed food in the box.

Athwartship between the two forward lifeboats was a tier of life-rafts. There should be another tier of life-rafts to the stern end of the boat deck. He went to the stern tier, feeling and appraising their possible value. They were of steel, with

cylindrical round-ended air chambers lengthwise, joined together by a steel deck.

The rafts were the thing—if it came to it. Boats were all right, with expert men handling them; but the deckhands of the *Argosy* were not expert in handling boats—Jan knew that. He also knew that lifeboats were not too easily launched by inexperienced hands in smooth water, whereas in rough water!—Jan grew cold.

The bit of snow was gone. A vaporish mist was rolling in. Fog that would be soon—a black fog. He walked forward toward the wheel house. Through the open lee window he could see two shadowy figures moving restlessly. Presently he heard a bell ring, and a voice:

“Hell! What’s it now d’ y’ s’pose? What’s that? Repeat, please.”

There was a pause; and then this from the captain: “The devil!”

“Better put in somewhere for the night, hadn’t we, sir?” Jan knew that for the mate’s voice.

“Put in where and this vapor gettin’ thicker?”

“Could we try Gloucester?”

“Gloucester? Who’ll take her in there? Will you take her into Gloucester with Norman’s Woc to your port hand and that damned long breakwater

to your starb'd, and a vapor growin' thicker every minute? Will you? Want to try? I guess you don't. Nor me. Sh-h!"

The blue-sleeved arm reached for the speaking tube. The voice said: "Hello! Yes, this is the captain. What! What's that? Repeat that!"

The captain held the tube so close to his ear that not a word leaked through to the listening Jan. At length he heard:

"All right—wait till I put her head to sea! But you work fast, mind! We can't keep her so too long, mind!"

The blue sleeve let the receiver slide slowly down into its brass-mounted tube. Silence held the wheel house.

"Real serious, is it, sir, below?" It was the mate's voice.

"Damn serious. We won't head her into Gloucester or anywhere else. Not right away. The chief says he will have to shut off her steam. Repairs."

"Repairs to what, sir?"

"I don't know. I didn't ask. What difference, anyway—some damn part of her machinery's gone dead. Her engines, o' course. Her damned old engines again. She ought to been hauled up long



ago and overhauled. But I s'pose they'd had a little less per cent dividend this year if they done that. 'Got to pay dividends'—a dozen times, I guess, they told me that in the office. Let's see how the sea's runnin', so we can head her into it.

"I don't think the vapor'll last. And here's that wind that most died down—it's risin' again."

"That's right—coming a northeaster. I thought we'd get it from there before we made Portland. I kind o' thought we might have engine trouble and I hinted we ought n't put out to-night, but a lot of attention they paid me in the office. They'll maybe lose more than their passenger and freight money before this night's over. Serve 'em right!"

Jan moved away from the wheel house. The breeze was making and before the drive of the breeze the vapor was rolling shoreward; and the ship, too, was drifting perceptibly shoreward.

The steamer's head was swinging slowly around to meet the wind. She oscillated, a point to one side, a point to the other, presently lay head to it—fair into the northeast wind. Her headway stopped.

Hove to? The wind from the northeast and the shore to the west'ard? Jan puzzled it out. Or tried to. To leeward lay the shore—a bad shore, a

rocky shore mostly. She would be sure to drift on that shore in—he'd give her three hours.

Three hours? And wind and sea continuing to make? Her hull was of steel—he knew that; he also knew that the steel was about as thick as three thicknesses of blotting paper. Also he knew that the steel hull stopped just above the water line. Her superstructure was of light wood; fancy stuff, all gilt and cream-colored paint. Gingerbread scrollwork and curlicues. Pretty to look at as a decorated cigar box, and about as strong.

Of course, everything might come out all right, but it was time to forelay for trouble. No harm getting ready. Officers and crew might be all right, but they would have enough to do looking after the ship. Passengers who could look after themselves would save the steamer people just so much worry and labor.

He, Jan Tingloff, had been the cause of that poor girl being aboard this rotten craft this night. She knew nothing of ships or of the sea. She had come in full faith that he knew all about such things. No one or two or three people aboard ship were the special concern of officers and crew. It was his job, no ship officer's, to look out for her; and it was high time he set about it.

The Boston & Portland Company steamers carried no wireless outfit. Leaving Boston or Portland, as they did, late in the evening, being due at the other end of the route early next morning, and never finding it necessary to go far offshore, why should they be spending money to install expensive wireless outfits when the law did not yet compel them?

What signalling the exigencies had heretofore forced on the old *Argosy* had been very well managed by pennants flown from her mastheads in the daylight hours and by lights and rockets at night. For what he had now in mind to do, Jan saw how the old *Argosy's* signal rig would be of service to him. Making his way to where the main mast butted through the boat deck, he groped for the signal halyards. He found them coiled on the pin rail as expected. He proceeded to unreeve them.

Jan had the normal ship master's respect himself for proper ship procedure. He knew that for what he was now preparing to do he should be asking the captain's authority; but he had been a witness to that captain's perplexity, and it was no time to be bothering a troubled man who might, very likely would, refuse his permission to carry off his signal halyards; so, in no mood to be risking a refusal,

he decided to go ahead anyway. He would be doing no damage that a few dollars could not repay, and he was forelaying to save life; whatever happened, nobody was going to hang him for taking over the use of thirty or forty fathom of hempen line. By this decision, whoever knew the ordinarily law-and-orderly Jan Tingloff could guess that he was tremendously determined in the matter.

The halyards made a fat coil when he had them all unreeved, more than enough for his purpose, but there is never any harm in having plenty of a useful thing—he looped the entire coil over his arm.

He groped in the nearest boat for oars. He took two oars, the longest two he could find. He lifted the water-keg and the little box of compressed food, pondering even as he did so on the lawless intent which seemed to be growing within him, a lawless intent, that is, in one direction. After due deliberation, he set keg and box back in the lifeboat: people might have to go in that boat, and among them might be delicate people, the kind who would suffer much from lack of food and water. He held onto the oars—any life boat could spare one pair of oars. He carried his oars and rope to the tier of life-rafts nearest the stern end of the

ship. He upset the top raft of the tier onto the deck, placed his oars and rope under the upset raft.

He had clearly in mind what to do to prepare that raft for his life-saving project, but there would be time to do that later, and just now there was something else to be seen to. The ship was having trouble holding her head to wind and sea, which, of course, was bound to happen to a powerless hull in a cross-tide. Even with no cross-tide the round-bottomed old tub would be having her troubles.

Leaving his raft to go forward he almost bumped into somebody who was rushing aft. The vapor being by now pretty well dissipated, Jan recognized the captain, who, he guessed, would be making for the stern ladder to the regions below.

“Hello, Captain!”

The steamer captain’s eyes were still blinking from the dazzle of the wheel house lights. “Who’s this? Oh, hulloh, Captain Tingloff! I didn’t know you were aboard.”

“I’m aboard, yes. Got one minute?”

“I was hurryin’ down to the engine room, but I got a minute for you. What is it?”

“I been noticin’ that the ship is beginnin’ to fall broadside onto the sea. I was thinkin’—I’m only a sailing ship master and not meanin’ to try and

tell you or any steamer man his business, but what you goin' to do to keep her head to sea, she havin' no steam to hold her there?"

"That's just what I was goin' down to the engine room to see about—gettin' some steam. They don't give me any satisfaction through the speakin' tube."

"Suppose you get no steam?"

"No steam! Good night!"

"Good night, yes. Now, see here. I've had to put a vessel's head to sea a hundred times, I guess, in my life. I think I could keep this one's head to sea."

"You mean to anchor her?"

"I wasn't thinkin' of anchorin', though I've anchored in water as deep."

"You have? If you did, it must've been in a sailing vessel where you overhauled your ground tackle every trip of your life. Do you know how often this old packet has had her mud-hook on bottom? In nineteen years since I have been with this company how often, d' y' think? Never! Not once. Good God, man! I'll bet we haven't got hawser or chain enough in her lockers to reach bottom in fifty fathom o' water. No, by God!"

"No need to anchor her. Rig a drogue—"

"A sea anchor?"

"Sure."

"With what? For God's sake, man, where's the gear on this old wagon to rig a sea anchor?"

"You don't need any great lot o' gear. I saw some barrels of kerosene bein' rolled into the hold when I was comin' aboard, and I know you got some lumber in the freight hold. Give me a couple of those kerosene barrels—one full one and one empty one—some stout planks, your small anchor and a line to lash 'em together, and I'll rig you a sea anchor while you're down givin' hell to the gang in that engine room."

"How would you get that over the bow with no steam to hoist it?"

"Give me three or four deckhands and a couple o' small blocks and I'll rig a whip to her forem'st and we'll hoist it over by hand."

"No, you wouldn't! You might with three or four huskies from your own ship's crew, good sea-going people; but we got no sea-going people aboard here. This company don't furnish sailormen for our deck force. Deck swabbers we got. There's only three of them altogether—they'd only be in your way."

"Then give me a three-shieve block and a little time and I'll hoist it over myself."

The two men had been shouting to make each other heard over the rising wind. The steamer captain gave a final shout:

"No, no, steam's our only chance. Goin' down to see about it." He descended the after ladder to the regions below. Jan gazed meditatively down the same ladder. The suspicion had been born in him that it wasn't a matter of steam alone that was worrying the steamer captain. Presently he too descended the ladder and sought the regions below.



## VI

WHAT might be happening on deck outside, what disturbance of wind and wave there might be, what the people around her might be doing—Lena Goles was too self-absorbed to care or take note of these things. The ship could be on the verge of sinking and she not violently disturbed at the prospect.

Motionless, oblivious to the life going on about her, she remained in the chair where Mollie Hoey had placed her. Drama, tragic drama, perhaps, was being enacted in her own life. She had at last taken the unthinkable step: parted from the husband she had wedded in so romantic a spirit. She was returning to that home to which she declared she would never return unless with her husband in honor.

She could smile, in so much had her youthful illusions disappeared and wisdom developed within her—she smiled in pity for herself as her mind dwelt on the varied humiliating aspects of that return to her home. That she could smile at all

was an encouragement. Her life with her husband had not, at least, entirely submerged her native buoyancy. Born all of faith in human kind, something of that saving faith still remained to her.

Her memory persisted in recalling, even beyond thought of her own past misery, the burly figure, the honest face of the coaster captain. He it was who had restored her faith in men; he it was, physically so far removed from the pictures of her maiden fancies, that she was now envisaging for all that seemed desirable in men. Suffering and humiliation was clearing her vision.

She shivered; not with cold, nor with fear—not with physical fear, certainly. Here she was, still a married woman, musing, for all her strict upbringing, on the attractions of a man she had never seen up to two weeks ago; which dread thought did not blot out the vision of one more picture of herself as the distressed maiden and he as the knight in shining armor. She smiled at herself again: her romantic fancies would probably remain with her while she lived.

Back in the rooming house she had striven to convince herself that the shy captain could not possibly be falling in love with her: a married man of his kind would never allow himself to fall in love

with her or any other woman. But the revelation that his wife was dead had suddenly changed the face of things. He had been free to woo her all the while, never suspecting that she was not free to be wooed. The belief that he was married—she knew it now—had been as much of a safeguard to her as her own native virtue.

She had become fearful of herself. Marriage to her had been, was still, an inviolate sacrament: What God had joined together, let not man rend asunder. She had never nourished a thought of divorce as a way out of her troubles; neither would the simple, rugged sailor suggest that way out. He never would; no; and she would never see him again.

He would return to the rooming house, where Goles would be waiting for him. The sailor could break Goles across his knee if he so wished, but Goles would give him no chance to do that. Goles would waylay him—not in the rooming house—the danger of a second murder there would be beyond the desperation even of a dope addict—but some night while en route from the schooner, a dark night and a dark wharf, there would be chances to do away with him.

At the thought of harm to him, she drew her

arms up in fright across her breast, as if striving to protect something precious within herself. The thought was overpowering, desolating. So long as she knew that he remained alive somewhere, even if he never again came near her, he thinking of her as she would be of him, even though he might not guess that, just so long would the sun be bright and the earth fair to look at. But with him gone!—

She made a resolute effort to get away from her thoughts. She began to look about her. The ship had long ago left the wharf. It must now be well out to sea—the saloon floor was lifting under her. Her mind must have been far away indeed. A half dozen passengers now remained in the saloon. Presently one and then another of these stood up and made his troubled way across the heaving floor. They were obviously on the verge of seasickness.

She felt no discomfort herself. Physical distress would have been a relief to her poignant thoughts, but she knew that no such relief would come to her.

There was a three-piece orchestra in the saloon—harp, piccolo and piano. They were still playing, though the heaving deck was not making for perfect harmony among them. The piccolo player,

above all, was having trouble in holding his instrument to his lips. He signed for permission to cease playing. The pianist, the leader, and evidently a conscientious performer, glanced up at the clock above the wide stairs. He pointed his head at the piccolo player and then up to the clock. The clock said ten-thirty. Quitting time was not yet. The piccolo man resumed playing.

Two more passengers stood up and made their troubled way out of the saloon. Only Lena now remained. The floor was now heaving violently.

The pianist was now consulting the clock, and not the clock alone. He strove to pierce the gloom of the deck through the nearest saloon windows. He glanced from the window to the clock, from the clock to Lena, as if wondering if she would object if the music should quit.

His frequent uneasy glances toward the saloon window prompted Lena to glance that way. A face flashed for an instant against the glass. It was the face of her husband.

What a horrible vision! "I am growing feverish," she muttered, and thought of going to her room and to bed; but Mollie said she would come back. She would wait for Mollie.

Jan reappeared on the forward end of the berth

deck from his visit below. He was moving with less deliberation than heretofore. The ship's head had fallen off a point or two, spray was falling in continuous showers onto her forward deck.

Anxiety for Lena was taking hold of Jan. No harm in a little loose spray, but a girl sitting alone by herself, who had never been to sea before, might be frightened by it. Even a regular seafaring man wouldn't pick a steamer of this class for a heavy weather battle, not top-heavy as she was with all kinds of top-side gingerbread work that wouldn't stand too long if ever she got caught wrong and no handy harbor to run to.

He wondered where Goles was keeping himself. He had strained ears and eyes since Hoey reported him aboard, but had not yet caught sight of him. Now, while looking into the saloon to see that Lena was still there, he heard a door slamming, a door somewhere on the midship deck, a stateroom door probably. He saw a figure, a shrouded man's figure, through the gloom, making slow going of it on the jumping deck. It was a man in a raincoat he saw.

He identified the walk ere yet he could make out the figure or face of the man—head and face being held down against the wind.

It was Goles.

The open space on the forward saloon deck was only dimly lit. Jan stepped back to where the light from the saloon windows would not shine on himself.

Goles came lurching along, head down in the wind. A hand rail encircled the rounded front of the saloon under the windows. Goles grasped this rail, steadied himself, stared through the saloon windows. His face remained set for some little time in the direction of where Lena was sitting.

"Watchin' her," thought Jan. "Been watchin' her all evenin', prob'ly."

Goles's head turned as if searching out every corner of the saloon. "Watchin' for me, wonderin' where I am. I dunno but I'll let him know," thought Jan, and started for Goles.

Goles let go of the helpful rail and started back the way he had come, his head now thrown back on one shoulder, his body half leaning back against the weight of the wind behind him. A heave of the ship's deck upset his balance. He fell against Jan, now close behind him. Jan held him up until he found his feet. A blob of sea water drenched them both. Goles did not even look at his helper to give thanks, but Jan heard him mutter:

"I heard one of the sailors say the ship was in danger."

"She is. And like to be worse. So if you want to shoot anybody, you better wait till we're safe. To-morrow, maybe."

Goles's head came around with a snap:

"Oh, you!"

Without a further word he backed off. Half lurching, half running, he put deck space between himself and Jan. He pulled open, and quickly, a stateroom door in the waist of the ship.

Jan entered the saloon through the passageway directly behind Lena. As he bent to speak to her over her shoulder, the deck rolled. She gripped the arms of her chair. The legs of the chair came loose and the chair started to slide across the saloon. She scrambled from the chair. The deck rolled the other way—she put out her arms to grab something. Jan had curved one hand around a stanchion to steady himself. His free arm caught her before she could go flying past him. His arm encircled her waist, and held her securely. Her arms, thrown up wildly, fell around his neck.

Realizing that it was a man who held her, she uttered a confused cry and drew down her arms.



She saw who it was. "Oh-h!" And then: "You came back?"

He was still holding her. Her body quivered within the circle of his arm. He shifted his grip to her arm and led her to a chair more likely to keep its place, a heavier one that set back-to-against a stateroom bulkhead.

"You did not leave the boat!" Her face had been pale enough before this. It was now bright with color. He dreaded to see her grow pale again, but he thought it was time to warn her.

"Your husband is aboard."

Her hands had been gripping the arms of the chair. She brought one up to her breast. It was an involuntary gesture. It pained him.

She forced down her hand. "Why did you ever stay on the ship?"

"He trailed us here. He means harm—harm to you."

She shrugged her shoulders and smiled, a pitiful faint smile: "He means harm to you now. I am entitled to be harmed. But you——"

"I'll risk bein' harmed by him."

She avoided his glance, stared around the saloon. "Some of the passengers seem to be worrying. Is there danger?"

"If they straighten things out in the engine room there's no danger. A good thing in one way—the danger. It will frighten him, maybe, so he won't try anything bad."

"He will have to be very much frightened when he tries nothing bad. There is real danger to the boat?"

She was now looking directly at him, and Jan had long ago learned, through his mother, through his sisters, cousins, aunts, and above all from his wife while alive, that he had not the right face for hiding his thoughts from women. Besides, what was the use of denying danger when he would soon have to be telling her to make ready for it?

"There is a good deal of danger, more danger than these people know."

"I'm sorry."

"I'm sorry, too. Only for me you'd never been aboard here."

"I didn't mean—that! No, not that!" She seized his hand. "I did not mean that I was sorry for myself. I am not eager to die—not now, though if I did die it might be better than to continue living as I was. It was you. You have something to live for. Your boy, your mother. A pity you ever came to that house."

"It's no pity. No matter what happens it's no pity."

She averted her face, stared at the floor. She lifted her eyes, which were bright again. "There is danger of the boat going down?"

"There is. But that don't mean we got to go down with her. We may go down, too—I'm not sayin' we won't go if she goes, but we got a chance. A good chance. You better stick to me, I think. By and by there may be a lot o' people rushin' around here. There'll prob'bly be a lot o' hollerin' and excitement. An' there'll be people callin' out—ship's officers, maybe—to come this way or that way. No matter what they do or say, don't let 'em frighten you into goin' with 'em. Wait for me. You'll wait for me, will you?"

"I will wait for you." Her fingers closed around his hand.

The saloon floor heaved yet more violently. Her hand gripped his even more tightly.

The orchestra had stopped playing. It was not yet their closing hour, but the jumping deck had overcome even the conscientious pianist. He had at last given the word, and with an air of vast relief the piccolo player was encasing his instrument. The pianist was more leisurely, or at least striving

to seem to be more leisurely, throwing a maroon-colored cloth over his instrument. The harpist had hoisted his instrument onto his shoulder and was already on his way.

The boat was now fairly in the trough of the sea. The heavy rolling from side to side was continuous.

"I'll leave you here for a little while," said Jan. "I got to get word to Jack Hoey and his wife. He'll be dependin' on me to tell him how things are lookin', so I got to hurry along and pass the word to him. And I have a couple of other errands to do. Of course, all this talk may be foolish—everything may turn out all right, but it'd be more foolish not to be gettin' ready. Anyway, don't let anybody frighten you, will you?"

"I'll not be frightened when I know I have you to depend on."

"And you'll wait for me here?"

"I'll wait for you." She had been trying to hide her delight in his unexpected presence: she made no attempt to hide her faith in his courage and resource. She smiled at him. "Even if I see the ship sinking under my feet, I'll wait for you."

Her faith thrilled him. Women certainly were amazing when a man came to know them.

He patted her hand. "I'll be back before she sinks under you, be sure of that."

The one fancy piece of ship's furniture on the old *Argosy* was the large, square, brass-mounted port which afforded light and air to the bar-room. The idea of the company had been to provide plenty of fresh air and light to the most profitable portion of its patrons.

Jack Hoey, a fresh air disciple, liked to keep this airport open. The three passengers who had pre-empted the little table under this air port as the ship pulled out from the dock were still there when the first spray began to come aboard the old *Argosy*. They were still there when it began to splash across her main deck passageway and roll up against the outside of the bulkhead.

Hoey had his eyes and ears open for just such a happening. To a waiting steward at the service door he shouted:

"Get a deckhand to come and secure that air port."

The deckhand was slow in coming. Hoey stepped from behind the bar to close the port himself. He arrived a bit late: a big lump of sea water plumped over the rail, splashed across the

deck, mounted up the bulkhead and found its way through the open port. Down it plopped onto the three passengers inside.

They leaped up, shaking the water from their coats.

"It's nothing—just a little chop on," said the Bay of Biscay man. They resumed their seats.

A more solid sea followed; a yet heavier one arrived immediately after. This time they leaped up, and stayed up. This was getting to be no place for them, widely-experienced travelers though they might be. One opened the deck door, but at once closed it. There was too much loose water on the deck outside to please him.

They appealed to Hoey for a safer exit. He motioned them to pass out by way of the service door and into the inner passageway. They scuttled through and out of sight. Hoey, grinning and murmuring, "And they liked it rough!" proceeded to clamp the inside storm cover onto his bedrenched air port.

He had resumed his place behind his bar when the deck door was hurled open. It opened with a rush, but closed less quickly. The man hanging onto the knob had to brace his shoulders against it to close it. Between the opening and the closing

several barrels of sea water entered the bar-room.

It was Jan who entered. His motions were quick and hurried—for him. Hoey waited for the message.

“Something’s wrong, Jack—I’m not sure what—with her engines.”

“There gen’rally is; and nobody ever seemin’ to know what—with her engines. They hove her to, I noticed, a while back. Wind no’the-east still?”

“No’the-east, yes.”

“Great! A fine rocky coast along here to have under a ship’s lee in a no’the-easter, hah?”

“A hard place enough, but the wind won’t be her trouble.”

“No?”

“No. The wind’s moderatin’ again, and the sea making.”

“Leakin’ is she?”

“Leakin’ some, but that’s only part of it. I think her boilers are threatenin’ to break loose from their bed plates under this heavy rollin’. If they ever break loose they’ll go through the ship’s side.”

“The old raft—is she as bad as that?”

“She’s a pretty old packet. She was old when the comp’ny bought her. I remember her twenty

years ago, no young boat then, runnin' into Norf'k on the old Middle Coast Line. So I thought I'd tip you off, Jack—so you'd have time to look after your wife. Tough on women to be aboard an old hooker like this if anything happens."

"You're right. It is tough. And if the boilers do go through her old sides, I'll give her about seven minutes and a half to stay afloat. There'll prob'bly be a rush for the lifeboats. What shape they in, Jan—get a chance to look 'em over?"

"I looked 'em over, an' they're all right, I guess. But I'll take a life-raft for mine."

"Life-raft?" Hoey's eyelids drooped while he considered the matter. He nodded. "I guess you got that right—a life-raft. They won't capsize—life-rafts."

"That's what I thought, too. There's two tiers of 'em on the boat deck, and I'm goin' to rig one of 'em up with life lines and oars. But I'll be seein' you before it comes to that. If I was you, though, Jack, I wouldn't stick around here too long. How long you s'posed to stay on watch?"

"Till there's no more business. I don't think there'll be much more to-night. Y'ought to seen the last three customers go through that door. They acted like they thought they were goin' to be washed



overboard right away. Think I'll order myself off watch before long. Where'll you be?"

"I'll be in the saloon when the time comes. I'm goin' to look around a bit more, especially below, but I'll be back to the saloon no matter what happens. And your wife, Jack—will it be all right to tell her?"

"Sure, tell her. Nothin'll scare Mollie."

A hogshead of sea water poured into the bar-room while Jan was going out by way of the deck door. The catch on the door was not too secure. A moment after Jan's departure a hard sea slammed against the door, forcing it open. Barrels of spray rolled through the open door.

Hoey surveyed the water sloshing back and forth across the floor. He waded from behind the bar and, after an effort, closed the deck door. Spray drenched him.

"Not pretty soon, but right now is when I go off watch," he muttered.

He sprang open the cash register and counted the money, making a note on a pad of the amount in bills and the amount in coin. He rapidly recounted them, checked the amount on the pad. He recounted the coins, checked the amount of them on the pad. He crowded the bills into one trou-

ser pocket and dropped the coins into the other. He had a last glance into the cash register, made sure he was leaving no money there, set down the total amount, \$45.40, on a fresh sheet of the pad, signed his initials, J. H., shut the pad up in the register drawer.

He was acting quickly but calmly. Happening to glance in the mirror, he took note of the white service jacket he was wearing. He removed the jacket, hung it carefully on a hook in a locker at one end of the bar. "No tellin', nothin' may happen and I'll need you again," he thought.

He lifted out his ordinary street coat, put it on, closed the door of the locker.

On the shelf behind the bar were several boxes of cigars. Of one brand, half a dozen remained in the box. He set three of these into one upper vest pocket, rang up \$0.15 on the cash register. "Ten cents straight to passengers, but wholesale price to me. Nothin' like havin' accounts straight," he chirped. He dropped the pad back, snapped the register shut, this time for good.

Throughout all these little activities he was balancing deftly between the bar and the shelf behind it. Bottles of whiskey and brandy were in racks on the shelf. One was an especially good

brand of whiskey. "A little good whiskey mightn't be a bad thing for somebody on a cold night on a raft." He tried to fit the bottle into his jacket pocket. It would not go in. He set it back on the shelf, placed the others on the shelf preparatory to locking them up under the bar for the night. The boat gave a terrific lurch and off the shelf the bottles hopped, and onto the floor they crashed.

He spared them a regretful look. He never drank himself, but there were men—he thought of The Pest back in the restaurant—who would have wept at the sight.

The ship rolled again, a sea struck hard. The deck door flew open. A ton—two tons, Hoey decided—of water came smashing in. "The old girl's cert'nly rollin' now," he muttered. "Go it, you old tub, while you got a chance."

The sea water swirled and eddied around and around the floor. "And more to follow, a lot more," Hoey muttered. "Time for me to be getting along." He had a last look around—at bar, at shelves, at bulkheads, to make sure he had forgotten nothing.

His eyes lit on a drawer under the bar. Ah-h!—the automatic! He took it up, snapped the cartridge chamber open, slipped the clip in and out.

A fine weapon. A pity to leave it behind. He imagined himself swimming with the pistol in his pocket. He shook his head—too heavy—tossed it back and closed the drawer.

One final look disclosed a cardboard sign on the shelf under the bar. It read:

BAR CLOSED.

He studied the sign, hung it on a hook behind the bar, carefully set it straight, saluted it gravely, and passed through the service door.

At the after end of the ship on the saloon deck was the room of Hoey and his wife. In the dull travel season as now, the Portland Company allowed spare passengers' quarters to a few favored employees. The room allotted to the Hoeys was larger than the ordinary stateroom, had a bed instead of bunks, a dresser and a clothes closet. To this room Hoey made his way. He was moving rapidly now. Jan Tingloff was no alarmist—when he said Get ready! a man could lay a bet it was time to get ready.

From the closet of their room he took Mollie's heavy coat, her heavy shoes, heavy stockings,

placed them in readiness on bed and floor. From the closet he took his own overcoat and put it on. He looked about the room for what next to attend to.

An enlarged snapshot of Mollie and himself set up on a little easel on the dresser. He took it up, studied it, tried to fit it into his overcoat pocket. The frame made it too large. He was breaking it out of its frame when the door opened. Opening inward as it did, the door shut Hoey out of sight.

Mollie entered. She made a dive for the dresser, pawed over the top of it, tossing his collars, ties, shaving gear this way and that. "My Lord, is it lost?" she moaned.

"Is what lost?" Hoey came from behind the door, speaking with assumed gruffness. "What you botherin' about? Didn't Captain Tingloff tell you what's liable to happen?"

"He did, dear."

"Then what are you waiting for? Why don't you hurry and get ready?"

"I will, but— What's that you have there?"

"This? That old snapshot?" He faced the photograph to her.

"God love you, darlin'! And you took time to come up here an' get that old picture!"

"You took time, too, didn't you?"

"I'd take time to come an' get it if the ship was sinkin' under my two feet—the only picture I have of you and me together, Jackie, dear!"

"And a tough one it is of me!"

"'Tis not. It's lovely of you."

"Me lovely! Wow! Mollie, you're cert'nly a cure. Here." A heavy sweater of his lay across the foot of the bed. "Put this on."

"Yes, dear."

He helped her into it. "An' now get into these shoes an' stockin's."

"And what about yourself an' your two feet—look at them, soakin' wet!"

"Never mind my two feet. They'll be wetter before they're drier. Shift into these shoes an' stockin's."

"But——"

"No buts. Get into 'em."

"Yes, dear." She meekly made the change.

"And now get into your coat." He held it for her. "Now get along to the saloon."

"Yes, dear." In the door she turned to get a last look at the room. "Our lovely room! No other room will ever mean so much to us again, will it, Jackie?"

"Go on! Want the ship to sink under us and we loafin' here? Hurry along!" He gave her a gentle push into the passageway, a squeeze of the hand with the push. She hung onto his hand.

"Jackie, dear, if anything happens us this night—" She kissed him suddenly.

"There"—his voice was husky. He drew her to him and kissed her. "Nothin's goin' to happen us—we'll go together. Go on to the saloon."

"I will, Jackie, but I must stir up the few women passengers before I go. There's a couple in a room down here." The few staterooms in the after end of the ship opened on the inside passageway. Mollie knocked at the nearest stateroom door.

A middleaged man and his wife peeked out. Each was clinging by one arm to the edge of the top bunk. "Is there danger?" he asked.

"I could not say that, sir," said Mollie. "But there will be no harm if yourself and your wife dress warmly and come into the saloon and be ready. In case we have to go into the boats, sir."

"Should we take these life-preservers?"

"Should they take them, Jackie?"

"Sure take 'em. Take 'em, ma'am. You prob'ly won't need 'em, but you might's well take 'em."

"If we don't need 'em, why should we take 'em?"  
The man's disputatious tone peeved Hoey.

"Why? For forty reasons. One is that if they don't keep you afloat they'll maybe help to keep you warm. Whatever they do they're no harm; same's a new religion if you believe in it."

"What's religion got to do with a life-preserver?"

"For the Lord's sake!" In an aside he whispered: "Wait a second, Mollie, while I argue with this nut. There'll be people on Judgment Day, I bet yuh, arguin' with the angel Gabriel whether to come out of their graves or go back into 'em while he's blowin' his horn."

Hoey turned back to the man. "Mister, I said a life-preserver's like a new religion—it'll do you good if you believe in it. What's the matter with that? Anything'll do yuh good if yuh believe in it—rheumatism rings, even. And nothin'll do yuh good 'less yuh do. People who don't believe in anything never get anywhere."

Mollie knew her Jackie. Life or death was nothing to him while he had an argument to settle. "There's a woman—a Polish woman, I think—with the loveliest little baby, Jackie! I'll hurry on and call her."



Mollie hurried on, and was about to knock on a door when it opened before her. The Polish woman, very calm, with a baby hugged close to her, greeted Mollie with a smile and "Bed storm, yes?"

"I'm afraid it's more than a storm, ma'am. Wrap the wee thing up warm now." Mollie seized the blankets off the top bunk. "You didn't think of the blankets, did you?"

"Oh, yes, I think, but not mine. Belong steamer."

"Oh, the company is not as mean as that!" She wrapped the baby in the blankets. The blankets from the lower bunk she wrapped around the woman, who then followed Mollie up the passageway.

When Mollie returned to where she had left her husband, he was fitting a life-preserver around the disputatious passenger. "I shut him up," whispered Hoey, "but he was a tough one!"

The man was trying to keep his balance while Hoey was adjusting the life-preserver to him; despite that, he was still muttering as if not entirely convinced.

"Come on, now! And your wife. Follow us to the saloon. All ready, Mollie?"

"There's one more passenger, Jackie. There's a couple in one of the outside rooms—twenty-seven. I knocked on the door once before to see if I could be of any use to her. The man called out not to be disturbin' them."

"I'll go call them. Twenty-seven?"

"Twenty-seven, yes, dear. They may have gone to sleep."

"Don't worry—I'll wake 'em. Twenty-seven. Take these people to the saloon. I'll be right back there."

Goldie was sitting on the edge of the lower bunk in room twenty-seven when Goles burst in, fresh from his encounter with Jan.

"Jeepers, you look scared to death!" said Goldie.

"I do? Well, I'm not." He sat down beside her. "I just saw her and him." His voice was thin, high-pitched. "Here, what's the matter? Have another drink."

"Not now. Wait a while."

"What's coming over you? Here!" He seized the empty glass which she had in her hand, reached under a pillow, found the brandy bottle,

poured out a stiff drink. "Where's that other bottle of ginger ale?"

"Where you left it—in the wash basin."

"So it is!" He pried off the cap, poured ginger ale on top of the brandy, pressed the glass into her hand. "Here, take it. It will head off that seasickness you're so afraid of."

"It won't head it off like champagne. You sure they wasn't any champagne in the bar?"

"Didn't I tell you there wasn't?"

"I know you did, but the barkeep might 'a' been lyin' though. Didn't you say he was fresh?"

"Fresh? I'd like to have him in the right place off this ship."

"He maybe had a coupla bottles that he was keepin' back for swell guys."

"Swell guys? What do I look like—a tramp?"

"Forget your looks, will yuh? If you slipped him a dollar or two, he might 'a' loosened up."

"Catch me! He had no champagne, I tell you."

"I heard yuh. I was on'y sayin'."

"You say too much sometimes. Here's your drink, brandy and ginger ale, the best thing in the world for seasickness, the bartender told me."

"He did?"

"Didn't I tell you he did?"

She sipped it. Usually she enjoyed her liquor, but not to-night. She was frightened. The bunk was rolling high and rolling low under them. She wanted to set down her glass half empty, but seeing no safe place to set it she hung onto it. Goles, seeking a safe place to put the bottle of brandy, stuffed it down at last between the mattress and the lower bunk board.

The lifting and falling of the floor was not the only thing alarming Goldie. She wasn't the most intelligent creature, but she was cunning in her creature way and she knew Goles: He wasn't trying to ward off her seasickness so much as he was trying to get her drunk. And why?

Too much liquor for her was like dope for him. Under the influence of liquor she could be coaxed to do anything; and afterward, sometimes, to forget what she had done. The thought of getting drunk did not disgust her—she had been drunk more than once in her young life; but what he might coax her to do while she was drunk this night—that did trouble her.

“Why don't you drink that up?”

“Why don't you take a drink yourself?”

“You know I don't drink.”

“Course I know. Got somethin' better, haven't

yuh? Nice white stuff!" His brooding stare was getting on her nerves, which had not been as steady as they might be from the beginning of the night's adventures. "Booze, booze, booze for me, but nothin' for you. Why don't you take somethin' for yourself? Have a shot of your dope, why don't yuh, from out the little blue bottle, an' be comp'ny if nothin' else?"

"Anything to please you, girly!"

From a small blue bottle he poured a measure of the white powder onto the back of his hand. He sniffed it into his nostrils.

"How's that? Satisfied now, are you?"

He had got onto his feet to get the bottle out of his pocket, and was now clinging with one hand to the upper bunk board. He let go his grip of the bunk to tuck the bottle inside his clothes. A lurch of the ship caught him off his balance. He was thrown across the room.

Up to this time the sea had been striking obliquely, and so not with full force against the door and window. There had been more of spray than of solid seas washing over the side of the ship's deck. Now came a roar of water outside. A solid sea struck against the window.

A slatted wooden shade guarded the window

glass. The window glass and a slat or two of the shade crashed in before the weight of the sea. Goles was hurled back to the bunk.

Ordinarily, when under the influence of his drug, Goles feared nothing; but he was strange to the ways of ships and the sea. He did not know that the ship had been headed into the wind, that she had fallen off before it, that her sides were now swinging broad-on to it, and so she was thus getting their full share of the sea's force; not knowing this, he imagined that things were worse than they really were.

There was another roar of water; and another. One burst through the glass window, slat protection and all. Through the wide hole thus made the next sea came solidly. The water rolled round the floor to the tops of Goles's shoes. They were of patent leather, an expensive pair, and he cursed freely as he noted the damage—salt water—they were ruined. Goldie had climbed into the top bunk and was lying on her side, staring in terror at the smashed-in window.

A fresh heave of the ship threw Goles the other way. Before he could steady himself, a wave crashed against the door. Another one burst the lock. The door swung in, the sloshing water rolled

across the floor and up against the side of the lower bunk. Goles leaped for the door.

Goldie slid down from the top bunk. "Wait for me, Harry!" She grabbed his elbow.

"Wait for you! Wait for nobody! I'm looking out for myself now!" He threw her back against the bunks.

"Oh, you bum! You dirty bum!" she shrieked.

Hoey, hunting for a couple in room twenty-seven, found her clinging with both hands to the upper bunk. Tears of rage and splashes of salt water had streaked her rouged face into red and white blotches.

She was babbling and moaning to herself. "Come on," said Hoey, soothingly. "Everything'll be all right. I'll carry yuh."

It was no time for conventions. He took hold of her to lift her.

"Wait! Wait! My Gawd, wait! I can't leave that!" She had spied the neck of the bottle of brandy in the lower bunk. She wriggled from Hoey's grip, salvaged the bottle and stored it inside her blouse.

"Come on, sister—we got to get along!" He took her in his arms, she babbling:

"The dirty dog, the dirty dog—he ran an' left me!"

"Who left yuh? Not your husband?"

"My husband! Harry Goles my husband! I guess not! He wanted to be, an' me the damn fool almost fell for him!"

He tossed her onto his shoulder, stepped out of the room. She was a plump and weighty burden to be handling on that rolling, slippery deck. However, he safely made the nearest saloon passageway and there stood her on her feet. He was curious to learn more about Goles.

"Did Goles bring you aboard here? Yes? What'd he bring you for?"

"To spy around for him, the hoptoad—to stand watch while he was pullin' off something on a man named Tingloff, a ship captain. I'll tell the captain a few things he'll be interested to hear when I see him. Where you takin' me?"

"Into the saloon here. We may have to get into the lifeboats or onto rafts."

"What! You mean the ship's goin' to sink!"

"I dunno. Maybe. In here." He led her into the saloon.

"My Gawd!"

Tucked away in her room, her senses lulled by



her frequent potations, the doings in the saloon were a revelation and a shock to Goldie. Most of the passengers, dressed and partly dressed, life-preservers carefully tied around them or looped from their arms, were already assembled there.

The ship was rolling high, rolling low; and to keep from sliding all over the saloon floor, men and women were clinging to stanchions and chairs. One group clung to the piano, having faith in its solid bulk, which faith and bulk did not prevent it from presently sliding across the floor; slowly at first but gathering speed as it slid onward. With a last rush it crashed into the side of a stateroom. When the ship rolled the other way, back it came, now with no trusting passengers clinging to it.

Terror-marked faces showed here and there. A young woman in fine but sodden clothes clung to the arm of a young man. "And I told my folks I was going to stay with a girl friend in the country! And now they'll know!" she sobbed.

"That's one way I got it on her—I don't have to worry about what any folks o' mine will think," thought Goldie; which thought, however, brought no ease to her soul.

She saw Hoey about to move off. "Don't leave me!" she pleaded. "I'm getting terribly afraid."

"There's nobody feelin' any too gay," said Hoey. "I'll be back."

He had caught sight of the Polish woman. She had one arm around a stanchion; the other was holding her baby. She was humming to the baby when Hoey reached her.

"Want to save your baby?"

"Save bebbby? You save him?" she peered into Hoey's face: what she saw there seemed to reassure her. "Yes, save bebbby!" She re-wrapped the infant in his blankets, gave him a final hug, a last kiss, and offered him to Hoey.

"No, no, you keep him and come with me." He led her to where Mollie was waiting with Lena.

"Where's Captain Tingloff, Mollie?"

"He is gone to have another look below." It was Lena who answered, she still clinging to the chair where Jan had left her. Her manner and voice betrayed no uneasiness. He had said he would be back, and so of course he would, at the proper time.

"This is Mrs. Goles, Jackie."

Hoey had been looking at her curiously, thinking what a tragedy it might mean for Jan if she were not what he had taken her for.

"She's all right," thought Hoey, saluted and

shook hands. Lena glowed to the grip of his hand. This friend of the coaster captain's was her friend too.

A steward came hustling through the saloon. The uniform reassured some anxious ones. Some strove to question him, to hold him up; but his business, whatever it was, was not to be halted. He tossed clear of the arms that would have detained him. "Where's the Captain? Anybody seen the Captain? Who's seen the Captain?" he bawled. Still shouting, he disappeared onto the forward deck.

A ship's officer, a second mate, followed the waiter. One man spoke up: "Were they going to launch the lifeboats?"

"Lifeboats? In this sea?" the officer spoke hurriedly, then added more calmly: "There'll be no need of lifeboats. The ship's all right—don't you see the wind has died down."

And the wind had surely died down.

"And she's not rolling so much—see," answered the officer.

It was true that the ship was not rolling so quickly. It was now a slower, heavier, sluggish roll. The passengers in the saloon, grasping at

hopeful straws, pointed this out to each other as a sign that the danger was passing.

Hoey knew better. He had been feeling her decreasing liveliness under his feet, and knew it for what it was: she was filling up with water below. Any hope of steam was probably now gone. She must have taken in a lot of water to be as sluggish as she was now, and all that water in her meant putting out the fire under her boilers. And this long heavy roll meant that the boilers might by and by come clear of their weakened bed plates and plunge through the ship's side.

He motioned to Goldie to join the group he had gathered. She came, nodding in embarrassment to Lena.

There was no wind at all now, but the ship's hull was settling fast. She had at least been trying to ride the seas heretofore: now she seemed to have given up trying—the seas were riding her. Where the seas found an open deck space, as forward of the saloon, they were riding over one rail, across her deck and over the further rail without check.

Where they met with obstructions, as the state-rooms framing the saloon, they were battering them down. A passage door from the saloon to the outside deck gave way before one high rolling sea,

and driving onward that door came—edge on, side on, every way on, into the saloon. Another passageway door gave way; the horrified passengers saw cataracts of water pouring in. They looked for a refuge. There was none, except to cling to a stanchion; and they so clung, hearkening to the seas battering outside, watching fearfully the state-room bulkheads inside quivering to each battering charge.

“A few minutes now,” thought Hoey, “and we’ll all be swimming here!” Just then the lights went out.

“Don’t move!”

Through a hullabaloo of loud shouts, of smothered and unsmothered cries and shrieks, through the crackling of thin wood and the thunder of boarding seas, Hoey kept calling his orders for his party to stay where they were.

“This way for the boats!”

Hoey recognized the voice for the ship’s captain. He was holding an electric flash-light over his head, and moving toward the forward deck. In his wake could be heard the tramping of many agitated feet.

“This way!” the captain was shouting, waving his hand light toward the forward end of the ship.

"This way! This way!" some passengers repeated, and tagged after him.

"Do we follow him?" It was Goldie's voice in the dark.

"You stay here till further orders from us," answered Hoey. "You all stay here."

Hoey had assembled them near the head of the wide staircase that led to the smoking room space below. Some one with another hand light was now coming up the stairs.

The light was swept around, halted and held on Hoey's group. It was flashed from one to the other.

It was Jan who held the light.

To Hoey he whispered: "She's gone—no chance. She sprung a leak, a dozen leaks. Her freight hold is filled solid. I waded in water to my neck to get this hand light from the store-room. One of her boilers broke loose and drove four or five plates so far apart a man could swim between 'em. Are they all there?" He shifted the light from one face to the other of the group.

"All here," answered Hoey. "And a couple of extras, but I guess the raft can hold 'em all."

"She'll have to hold 'em. We better be movin'."

"Join hands," ordered Hoey. Mollie, Lena, the Polish woman and Goldie joined hands and followed Jan toward the stern end of the ship. Hoey brought up the rear.

At the after end of the saloon deck Jan halted. Hoey stepped up beside him. They could hear the seas surging across the open deck outside.

"I'll stand at the top of the ladder to the boat deck," said Jan. "You pass 'em to the ladder to me, and I'll take care of 'em up top."

Jan threw open the door to the after deck, ascended the top deck ladder, which was but a few feet away. Hoey escorted the women to the foot of the ladder, urged them to ascend quickly. Jan grasped them as they came up, helped them to the boat deck beside him. Lena, the Polish woman, Goldie and Mollie followed in order. Hoey crawled up after his wife.

A shadow of a man crept up the ladder after Hoey.

The little group had the after end of the boat deck to themselves. The main body of the passengers could be seen, dim moving shapes on the deck forward. There was a hubbub of crowding, anxious men and women moving in confusion. There was a shouting of words, the noise of the handling

of boat's tackle. Jan and Hoey could see the shapes of passengers taking their places in the first boat.

From under his life-raft Jan drew the oars and coil of line he had placed there. He explained to Hoey what he had in mind. They went to work. They needed no lights to do what they had to do, which was to loop the signal halyards over the ends of the pointed cylinders of air chambers, under and over the air cylinders amidships, and across the deck of the raft. The work was soon completed.

"Good life lines, Jack?"

"Yes, they ought to be able to hold on by them."

Their raft might not capsize, but it could be so pitched about by high-running seas that unaccustomed women might be tossed overboard. The life lines were to hold them safe. Jan and Hoey were to keep her head to sea, guide her course, with the oars.

"All aboard!" called out Jan.

Hoey placed the Polish woman, Lena, Goldie and Mollie on the raft. "Grip these life lines!" he ordered. They gripped them.

The boat deck was noticeably inclining toward the bow of the ship.

"Her saloon deck must be under already. Not



long now and she'll be under all over," whispered Hoey. "All set, Jan!"

"All set! You an' me, we'll hop aboard when she floats clear."

The sea was now rising rapidly up the top-sides of the steamer. Forward a boat was being lowered. There was a frightened cry. Another cry, a dozen cries, shrieks. Dimly they could see the boat dangling from one davit.

"Where'd the people go to from that?" asked Goldie. "There was some people in that boat"—she gripped Hoey's arm. "Where they now?"

"Never mind where they went. Take a good hold of those life lines!" And to Jan, in a whisper: "That boat'd live about four seconds in that sea."

They were preparing to lower another lifeboat forward—Hoey marked the shapes of men trying to swing her out from the davits. "Who's going?" shouted a voice. Nobody, it seemed, was eager to go, after seeing what had happened to the first boat.

"I'll go in her!" The figure of a man was seen to leap in. Two, three, a swarm followed. Too many followed. The falls were cast clear. Slowly she was lowered.

Jan and Hoey saw no more of what was going forward. A man stepped between them. "Will

you take me with you?" The voice was humble, pleading. Jan flashed his hand light on the man and saw a livid and distorted mask of a man's face.

It was Goles.

"Will you take me, Captain?" he repeated.

"Look at him—the yeller dog again!" shouted Goldie. "Don't let him! He's bad—he'll put a curse on the raft. Don't let him come!"

Jan made no reply.

"Put it up to his wife," whispered Hoey. "Wait—let me."

He took the hand light from Jan. "You want him to come?" asked Hoey. He threw the light to her face; and instantly withdrew it. Fear and aversion of her husband, a hope fresh shattered was what Hoey read there.

No answer came from her.

"What'll we do, Mrs. Goles—take him or leave him?"

Eternity hung suspended, so it seemed to the others, while they waited for her answer. Her voice, faint and trembling, was heard at last:

"Let him come."

"Get aboard!" gritted Hoey: he had feared she would say it. "Livelier, and not so damn careful of yourself—you!" He poked Goles in the ribs

with the handle of his oar. Goles leaped onto the raft.

By now the boat deck was steeply inclined toward the bow. The sea was rising like a tidal wave toward them.

“Ready, Jack?”

“Ready, boy!”

The two men stepped aboard the raft. They braced the blades of their long oars against the butt of the after mast.

The ship settled, settled. The raft lifted, dropped back, lifted on the crest of the uprising sea. The boat deck forward settled out of sight. She was going under fast now. The sea came clear up over the forward end of the raft; up over the feet, knees, legs of the women sitting nearest it. They stirred restlessly, as if to pull away from its cold touch.

“Steady!” called Jan. “Take good hold the life lines, everybody.”

The rising sea floated the raft clear of the deck.

“Now!” called Jan, and pushed on his braced oar. Hoey pushed likewise. “Now!” they called and pushed, one last push together, against the mast with the blade ends of their oars.

With a roll and a half-dive the raft leaped into deep water.

With her stern in the air, the weary old *Argosy* went down.

They heard a confusion of cries, shouts and groans.

The raft was tossed clear of the wreckage, riding high on the crests of the moaning seas.

"We may be able to pick up somebody," said Jan. He hailed and waited. No answer. Hoey hailed then: "Anybody there?"

They called again. No answer.

"We must be all that's left," said Hoey. "Don't slack your grip of those life lines, anybody."

## VII

THAT part of the New England coast off which the *Argosy* had gone down was old cruising ground to Jack Hoey and Jan Tingloff. As boy and man they sailed it. They knew, without having to consult any marine chart or almanac, that at this hour of this night the tide would be running to the eastward, which would mean out to sea, which would also mean cold and hunger for the women and the little baby before they could hope to be picked up.

The raft was hardly clear of the sinking ship when Jan said:

"I don't know, Jack, as we can do any more than keep her head to the west and against the tide till it turns and helps us—that right?"

And Hoey had answered: "Right you are—a westerly course, boy. Whenever the clouds break we'll grab a flyin' look at old Polaris, and check our course by him. And Mollie? Hearin' me, Mollie?"

"I hear you, Jackie."

"Let you and everybody else be sure and keep

a good hold of those life lines. Don't ever let go of them. You'll see this raft dance and spin and flop around, bounce half up to the clouds you'll think, before this night is through, but don't let that frighten any of you. She'll come down again and right side up. Keep passin' that word to the others, because I'll have little wind to be sparin' for chatter the rest of this night. If all goes right we may see land by mornin'."

Hoey was not too certain that they would be seeing land, or anything else in this world, by morning; though he had raised his voice cheerily to say that. Good words took no longer than poor ones to say, and they would serve to hearten the women.

And the women needed to be heartened. Inside the steamer, even while the stateroom bulkheads were crashing down before their eyes, they had been getting some protection; and even outside, on the top deck of the steamer, they had viewed the tossing seas from a superior height. But here on this flat raft there was no protecting house or bulkheads: nor any looking down on the sea ever. Above them always the seas were now.

They huddled on the raft now. What they saw of the earth when they looked out, was like a high-heaving and tumultuous chaos. Low black clouds

raced overhead, high seas rushed and boiled and roared all around, threatening to turn the raft end over end, to smother and bury them. Not a soul of them, not even Mollie before her brief experience as stewardess, had ever taken more than a harbor trip on a steamer; so now they crouched and cowered before the awful dread wondering—all but Mollie, whose faith in her man transcended all human limits—wondering how much longer they would survive.

Jan had rigged loops of rope to the fore and aft-lines to serve for rowlocks; a poor arrangement for rowlocks, but the best he could make of it. Their oars, one long oar to each, thus set low to the water; so low that they were compelled to rest on one knee to manipulate them. Half-kneeling thus, they worked after the manner of ancient watermen, drawing the oar handles to them, catching the blade forward, forcing it through the water by thrusting their arms out from their chests.

Only such men as these, trained to every manner of rowing from boyhood, could handle an oar after that fashion, and even they found it the severest sort of toil. It was draw in, grip the water, push away; draw in, grip, push—Jan on the left-hand side forward, Hoey on the right-hand further aft,

both timing their strokes by the chafing of the oar handles against the steel air cylinders.

They were not always able to stroke together. The unstable raft floor would lift unevenly, sometimes as if it would stand up on one air chamber as it rode the heaving sea, upsetting even their practiced balance. Frequently they found themselves pushing their blades against wind and not water; a wind which seized the wide oar blade, testing all their strength to offset it. At times their half-braced feet would slide down the sloping floor from under them. Only quick action then saved them from sliding into the sea. They would regain their balance and go on with their labor with no word of protest or impatience. What was the good?

They were facing the direction in which they wished to go, the reverse of the usual manner of rowing: Facing so, they could all the sooner catch sight of whatever might be in their path ahead: lights inshore, lights on sailing and steamships, or—no telling—the hoped-for loom of the shore itself when daylight should come.

Squalls of wind pursued them. When for a moment the wind would cease to howl or the sea to roar, as even a roaring sea sometimes does, the crouching women on the floor of the raft, though



they could discern no more than the shadows of the two men, came to know by the swish of the oar shafts in the rope oarlocks, by the clink of the shafts against the metal cylinders,—came to know by these signs that the two men were laboring steadily for their safety. Their ceaseless toil, their calmly spoken words of advice in the black tumult tranquilized the women in their nervous moments.

Jan exerted himself powerfully, Hoey cleverly, more dexterously; each in his own way efficiently, unweariedly; or, if feeling weariness, refusing to admit it to himself or to the other; above all, to let fall any discouraging hint that the women might overhear.

Black driving clouds above them and the dimly-outlined but terribly-real shapes of racing hills of water all around, shifting hills that seemed to rise up to the clouds, high hills of water with crests gleaming all-white against the black; white booming crests that curled and arched above their heads, threatening always to tumble directly down upon them, to overpower and bury them, and yet never quite doing so—perhaps because the two men at the oars were ceaselessly driving the raft out from under endless tumult and peril and toil: Such

was about all that the women on the raft saw of what was going on in the night.

One hour, two hours crept onward. The two men guessed the two hours by what sights they glimpsed of the Big Dipper through the racing clouds. Without breaking the silence, each oarsman calculated the time of night by such flying glimpses, which meant more than the time of night to them. It meant that at least the solid clouds were breaking.

However, no time yet for loafing: drawing backward, straining forward, forcing the wide blades through the stubborn water,—so they held to it, trying not to let their minds make too much of the long hours yet ahead, seizing on every happy glimpse of a shining star or patch of sky as a fresh excuse for cheerfulness.

Mollie was sitting close to Hoey. Her hand reached toward the shadow of him and she called—a low call so as not to alarm the others:

“You must be terribly weary by now, Jackie?”

“Huh! I could keep it up for a week,” he grunted; grunting the more determinedly because he would gladly have given everything he had in the world except herself for an hour in a dry bunk somewhere.

It might have been an hour later that Jan spoke his first word since they had left the wreck behind. He believed in cheering words too, but not without something real to back them up.

“Moderatin’, I’d say, Jack.”

“Mm-hh,” agreed Hoey.

An hour or so later Hoey spoke: “Daylight soon, Jan.”

“Before long now,” admitted Jan, sparing also now a protracted look for weather signs. The clouds had thinned out greatly,—one pale patch of sky had been showing steadily in the northern quarter. There was no longer a wail in the voice of the wind; the seas were not running nearly so high, nor were their white crests half so wide or deeply curling.

“Gettin’ into the lee of a point o’ land, Jack,” said Jan.

“Must be,” agreed Hoey. Neither lost a stroke.

It was almost clear daylight now. The shadows on the raft were taking on depth and breadth and a touch of color, changing to figures of the men and women. Ahead of them, well down to the westward, a whitish-yellow light was shining to their right hand; to the northward, a red light flashed and was gone; flashed and was gone.

"See 'em, Jack?" cried Jan. "Know where we are now, hah?"

"Uh-huh!" grunted Jack.

The women were now looking astern, where the rounding rim of the sun was edging itself above the sea; a pale yellow sun, not much to look at even when at last it shoved its whole round self above the cold gray sea; but it warmed their thoughts to see it, and warming thoughts are good as fire to thaw half-frozen bodies.

The two men knew that they should be seeing land soon; and by and by they saw it—a rocky cliff looming above the morning inshore vapor. A tracery of bare trees was outlined above the summit of the cliff.

The low mists melted before the morning sun, revealing great stones which thrust their round heads up through the surf, a surf which rolled high and receded, rolled and receded, high up against the side of the cliff and back into the sea to a low musical roar.

"Boulder Head," said Jan.

Hoey nodded: "And to the wes'ard of that cliff is a little cove," he added, to which, after a bit of thought, Jan agreed.

They pushed on; and in good time, not ceasing

to work even as he pointed, Jan motioned that he saw the entrance to the cove. Hoey gestured that he also saw. With a second gesture he indicated that the tide was drifting them straight toward the inlet. After a moment's study of the water Jan gravely agreed.

They could now ease up. Paddling less vigorously now, Hoey took time to gaze around the raft. The women had heeded his warning to hold onto the life lines and to stay in their places. Each was in the exact spot wherein she had been placed in the beginning; and each was still gripping a life line with both hands; all but the Polish woman, who had to spare one hand for her baby.

They had been told to keep quiet, and they had kept quiet. Even now, with the shore so near, only Goles broke the silence. "Land? Land?" he repeated in the high thin voice of a man on the edge of nervous prostration. Hoey made a face at him to keep quiet.

"But it is! See—land! And look there!" He was pointing to an upturned lifeboat.

"See it? Are we blind? Shut up!" Hoey made a move as if to jab the handle of the oar into him. Goles ducked, settled back into his squatting position.

The tide was drifting them into the entrance to the cove. "Only a few strokes now," said Jan. He and Hoey put in the needful strokes, and then let her drift. They were safe inshore. The flooding tide would do the rest.

Jan unshipped his oar, laid it neatly fore and aft beside the left-hand air cylinder. Hoey let his rest half-in and half-out of the water, the handle end under his bent knee.

"Whee-yeu!" Hoey rubbed his sweated brow across the back of his right wrist. "I call myself a moderately tough party, but Jan there—he's the real tough one. He could 'a' kept goin' for a week. Look at him now!"

Jan was standing erect, gazing alertly ahead, seeking a safe spot for their landing.

"Whee-yeu!" Hoey rubbed his brow across the back of his left wrist. The action swung his head toward Goles. From under his wrist, Hoey saw Goles peer steadily at the back of Jan's head, then around the raft, marking with twitching lips the location of every one there.

"What's that nut up to?" muttered Hoey, and peered around the raft himself. Jan was still standing up and gazing ahead from his place, which

was the right hand forward end of the raft. Beside him the Polish woman had her baby tucked to her breast. Lena was next behind Jan. Mollie was abreast of Lena, Goles and Hoey were next abreast. The girl Goldie was stretched across the stern of the raft, her feet behind Goles, her head almost resting on Hoey's heels. Only Goles had spoken or moved. Their deliverance was at hand; but chilled, spray-steeped, they were yet too numb to appreciate it.

Mollie was the first to show signs of life. "Glory be, Jackie, are we safe at last?"

The Polish woman heard the words, and lifted her head to look at the rocky beach toward which they were drifting. She smiled in understanding, then calmly prepared to give nourishment to her baby.

Lena turned to Mollie. "I am glad for you," she whispered.

"Glad for me but not for yourself, poor girl!" thought Mollie.

"Jeepers, but I'm stiff!" Goldie was coming alive also. She kicked one leg out, stretched one arm high, rested on her side and elbow to have a better look at things. "That land sure looks good!"

From within her blouse she drew out the brandy

bottle of the night before. She had had a few heartening nips during the night, but there were still about two drinks left in it.

She had a nip, nudged Hoey and proffered him the bottle. "A *good* bartender, and that's me," he grinned at her, "leaves that stuff alone."

She looked hurt, whereat he touched his lips to the bottle and passed it back. She held it pleadingly toward Mollie, who shook her head; but shook it with a smile to let the girl know there was no hard feelings. The Polish woman had eyes only for her baby, which she was now nursing behind the shelter of Mollie's back.

"I know you don't touch it"—Goldie was poking the bottle past Goles into Lena's back—"but go on—a little taste to warm y' up an' show you ain't nursin' any grudge."

Lena shook her head without looking around.

"That big captain he'd throw me overboard, I s'pose, if I even looked at him now. Well, I d' know as I blame 'im."

She tucked the bottle back into her blouse. When her hand reappeared it held a flattened pack of cigarettes. She nudged Hoey. "Got a match?"

He fished out his metal match case and passed it to her. She lit a cigarette, blew a ring toward



the land, handed back the match case under Hoey's elbow with a word of thanks and a proffer of the pack of cigarettes.

The exhausting work of the night had left Hoey weary in mind as well as in body; but the girl's offer seemed to stir memories within him.

"Thanks, but I got smokes here." He felt inside his coat for the cigars he had placed there in the bar-room of the *Argosy*. He could feel them still there, three of them, in his right-hand vest pocket.

"Hi-yah!" he cheeped as he felt them. "Dog-gone 'em!" he exploded as he saw they were broken across.

"Where the end of the oar fetched up against my chest," he explained to Mollie. "And me chargin' myself with the price of 'em in the cash register!"

"Try your other vest pocket, dear. You carry a cigar there sometimes that you take sometimes on a customer instead of a drink."

"That's right!" He felt in the left-hand pocket. There was one and—God was still with the good people!—it wasn't broken.

He fingered the cigar. It felt dry. He sniffed it. It smelled dry. He lit up; and toward the dis-

sipating clouds he blew a great gob of smoke. "And only for you, Mollie, I'd 'a' forgot that cigar! And some people tell you it don't pay to get married! Jeezooks, I 'most forgot somethin' else!"

He hauled a wad of bills from one trouser pocket, a handful of coin from the other. It was the bar money. He dumped bills and coins onto the floor of the raft. The bills were damp. He smoothed and separated them, laid them one atop of the other in as neat a pile as he could manage. The oar under his knee kept getting in his way. He cleared his knee and pushed the handle of the oar to Mollie to hold.

There was by now plenty of light. He picked up the pile of bills to count them. "Ten, fifteen, twenty, twenty-one, twenty-three—the only time, d' y' know, Mollie, I ever beat a cash register—thirty—was last night on that steamer? Yep. D' y' know I came nearer bringin' this money to the purser to put in the safe? Where's the safe now? Thirty-one. That's for the bills. Now the change. One dollar—y' don't see many of these silver dollars now, do yuh, Mollie? Two dollars—four—seven—twelve. Fourteen dollars and forty cents change. Lemme see. Thirty-one and—forty-five dollars and

forty cents. On a fine night, good weather, with a full passenger list—a lotta people don't like to travel by steamer this time o' year, 'specially when the weather don't look good. No. On a good night there'd been double that bar trade. Yes, easy double. And fifty per cent profit in it, which is why the company can afford a barkeep." He grinned. "A *good* barkeep."

He re-smoothed the bills, piled the change into neat piles of halves, quarters, dimes, nickels. He surveyed his treasure with a wrinkled brow. He peered toward the brooding Jan.

"Say, Jan, when a ship goes down, don't all debts go with her?"

"Hah? What do you say?"

Hoey repeated his question. Jan came slowly out of his reverie. "That's how I always understood it."

"And me. Then why oughtn't all credits go with her, too?"

Jan pondered the matter. "I never heard anybody put it that way before, but I don't know why not."

"Nor me. Anyway, we're the Admiralty Court here. We'll make it so. Where's the baby? There he is behind you, Mollie. Look at him—sound

asleep! Ain't he the little bear of a baby, hah? Did you hear him last night at all, Mollie? I didn't—not once. Any kid who came through last night without so much as a yip outer him, he ought to get a million dollars if we had it to give him, hah, Mollie?"

"Surely—the dear child!"

"Pass this money to his mother."

The Polish woman shook her head. "No, no, I have husband."

"That so? What does he do?"

"Oh, fine yob. He dig street."

"How much pay?"

"T'ree dollar day."

"Three dollars! Any other children home?"

"One, two, three"—she was counting on her finger tips—"eight odder."

"Only eight others? Three dollars a day to squander on nine children? You must have a couple million dollars laid away by this time? Here, put this to it."

"No, no!"

Hoey reached over Mollie's shoulder and crowded the money into her hand. "Put it in bank for baby."

"For bebbly in benk?" She smiled down at the

sleeping child. "For him, O yes!" She smiled at Hoey. She smiled at Mollie, tucked the bills into her stocking, crowded the silver into a pocket book in her bosom. "Tenk you!"

"You're cert'nly welcome. That's off my conscience. And now let's see where we are."

Hoey stood up to look. "Good! We'll be safe on the beach soon."

Goles touched Hoey on the arm. "Did you say we are safe now?"

"That's what I said." He brushed his sleeve where Goles's hand had rested.

"Thanks." Goles rummaged inside his rain-coat. His hand came out half-closed. Behind him Goldie squinted over his shoulder at the half-closed hand. She had been furtively watching him since the first streak of daylight. She looked up at Hoey, who was blowing rings of smoke toward the beach.

"Got another match?" She nudged Hoey as she spoke. Her eyes rolled toward Goles as she took the matchbox from Hoey.

Goldie lit her cigarette; and Hoey, half-facing around by way of taking back his match-safe, saw Goles, now facing away from the group on the raft, uncork a little blue bottle and pour some white

powdery stuff onto the back of his hand. He sniffed it up.

Hoey had no consuming desire to halt and rectify all the passing evil of the world. He found men and women to be good and bad, some seeming to be born that way, some surely made so by the manner of their bringing up. He could understand how a girl like Goldie had been brought down to where she was, and he could preserve a tolerant attitude towards her, even while he was wishing that Mollie could be kept clear of her: but some people he couldn't understand. He could not understand why a man, with evil enough in him naturally, Lord knows, to battle, should give himself to unnatural ways. He had a virile, wholesome man's contempt for the degenerate. And here was a degenerate who stood in the way of an old shipmate's happiness; for he had guessed more of Jan's story than that honest man had told him.

Jan was too good himself to wrong any man, even so villainous a creature as Goles. Hoey knew that from the beginning, and by now he was satisfied that Goles's wife was no light-minded, dallying kind. Jan was in love with her; and she possibly with him, good woman though she was. In her averted face and drooping figure, she staring for-

lornly out on the water; in the sagging body of Jan, gazing in silence straight ahead; and though safety lay just ahead, no word of cheer was passing between them,—these signs were evidence to Hoey that he had guessed right.

“You coyote!” murmured Hoey. “If I had the say of it, what would happen to you would be jar-rin’ to sensitive nerves!” He nodded to Goldie.

“He’s bad—watch him!” Her lips framed the words. She lay out on her side and curved her head under Hoey’s right side, the side away from Goles. She passed the match safe back to him, with a loud: “Here’s your matches.” Then in a whisper:

“He’s after the big captain. He’s got a gat on him—here.” She tapped her left hip. “He’d kill the big guy now if he could get away with it. And he’d maybe try to kill more than him. Watch him!”

Without further turning his head to draw attention, Hoey observed Goles; and so observing, witnessed a marvelous, almost instantaneous change. The hard night had left the man a haggard drooping wreck of a figure. And now, in a dozen seconds, he was sitting straight up, head erect, keen eyes, searching the raft. He seemed to be

counting as he glanced. "One, two——" Hoey detected his lips, moving to the count—"three, four, five, six——" At six he paused, his eyes on the Polish woman or her baby.

"It's the baby," speculated Hoey. "Six and the baby and himself. What's that mean? Jeepers!" Goles's head was turning toward Hoey.

Hoey looked away, feigning abstraction. He felt Goldie's fist in the small of his back. Her eyes, when he met them, were once more rolling toward Goles. Hoey let his own eyes roll sideways. He saw Goles, elaborately indifferent, looking away from the raft; but his left hand, the one furthest away, was thrust through the slit in his raincoat.

Goldie nudged Hoey to bend down to her. He did.

"He'll get the big captain!" she whispered. "He'll kill him, I tell yuh! An' he'll maybe have to kill some more—all of us maybe—to cover up. I know him. For God's sake watch him!"

"And I had to go an' leave that pistol o' mine in that steamer bar! Why didn't I foller that hunch an' take it along?" muttered Hoey. He tossed the butt of his cigar overboard.

"Oh, yum-m," he yawned, and slowly stood erect. "I'll take that oar now, Mollie. We may



have to give another shove or two before we land."

He balanced the oar in both hands, as if idly estimating the weight of it. He reversed it, holding it now so that the blade pointed across the raft and the heel of the handle rested in his right palm.

The raft was now well into the cove, the shore not more than two hundred yards away. "Picked out a spot to land, Jan?" Hoey sang it out cheerily; and as if made playful by the sight of the land so near, he tossed his oar toward the sky, caught it and tossed it again. He flexed his arms and bent his knees as if by way of loosening up his muscles for the fresh exertion of making the beach.

"Any place ahead of us here will do," called back Jan. His voice was indifferent, his attitude listless.

It was a flat sandy beach ahead. Goles stood up, as if to get a better view of it. Goldie tugged at the tail of Hoey's coat. "I'm on, I'm on!" whispered Hoey from out of a corner of his mouth. He was swaying the oar loosely across his body, rising lightly up and down on his toes, as if to loosen up his stiffened arm and leg muscles.

"Didn't you have enough exercise all night, Jackie?" asked Mollie.

"That was work, not exercise," he retorted, ceasing not to swing his oar across his body.

Goles seemed to have satisfied himself about the landing spot. He stood erect now, an incredibly vigorous man to view, considering what a wreck he had seemed a few minutes before. His furtive eyes swept the raft, and suddenly met Hoey's. Fairly into each others eyes they looked; and each knew. Goles's left hand came whipping out of the slit in his raincoat. "You first!" he snarled.

"Not me!" barked Hoey, letting drive as he gripped it with the blade-end of his oar. It was a copper-tipped blade. It flashed like a stroke of light and caught Goles under the chin. He was pulling the trigger when the oar caught him. Both arms went into the air to regain his balance; the cartridge exploded while the pistol was pointing upward.

Hoey thrust again. He was set for this one. It was a powerful, accurate stroke with his right arm, tense shoulders and braced legs behind it. It half-lifted Goles off his feet, spun him half-around. As he hung unbalanced, Hoey jolted him again, a short quick thrust against the wide red welt that was already showing across his neck. His head sagged forward, his arms dropped, his inert

body flopped down onto the air chamber. He lay there limply across the cylinder, half in and half out of the raft, then slid slowly, head downward, and overboard.

His body had disappeared.

He did not come up.

The tide moved the raft gently onward, Presently, astern of them, a cluster of bubbles tinged with red burst like sighs on the smooth pale-green water.

Hoey stared at the reddish bubbles. He shook himself. He inhaled and exhaled a tremendous breath.

"I never thought I'd live to kill a man, cert'nly never with an oar," he murmured. Mollie reached for his hand and held it.

"Kill a man! Him a man!" It was Goldie. "He'd 'a' got us all if you hadn't got him first. Even the baby. And who'd ever know what happened after he's shoved us all overboard—all dead? What a fine story he'd have for the reporters of how he got away from the wreck all alone on a life-raft! He'd been a hero, an' you"—Goldie leaned forward and tapped Lena on the shoulder—"you'd 'a' been a wicked wife runnin' off with a wicked sea captain. And you'd 'a' both

been drowned for your sins. He'd 'a' been the injured husband, an' your folks'd be tryin' to live down your memory, an' the house an' what more he could grab would be his! Got a match?"

Hoey passed her the matches.

"Yuh think I'm ravin' maybe, but he bumped off a guy in his roomin' house. I saw him. I said in court I didn't, but I did—me leanin' over a top-floor banister. He'd 'a' got me too if I'd said anything else."

Jan, no lightning thinker, was still trying to piece the bits of the tragedy together. Lena had stood up, and was gazing at the spot where she had seen her husband's body go down.

She sank slowly down upon the cylinder of the raft.

Presently she was sobbing.

"I'd be givin' three cheers and a tiger if it was me in her place. What you cryin' for now?" demanded Goldie. "Sorry for him?"

"I would be a hypocrite to say that."

"Then what you cryin' about?"

"I don't know. I can't help it."

It was Mollie who lifted her to her feet, saying:

"Cry away, dear. It will be good for you. We'll

be safe ashore soon, and you will have time to forget a lot of things then."

The raft grounded gently on the beach. Jan and Hoey stepped onto the sand, and helped the women to land. The sun was high enough now to be a comfort.

Jan had not said a word to Lena since the night before on the boat. Now he found courage to lay a hand on her shoulder.

"Come," said Jan.

Lena took his hand. Ahead of them arose a hill with many little rocks peeping out of the side of it. They went up together to the ridge of the hill. Below them lay a small city.

Jan and Lena, Hoey and Mollie, the Polish woman and her baby in the blanket—so they went in couples up the side of the hill.

Goldie brought up the rear. Lena had stopped weeping, but now Goldie was crying: "Everybody's got somebody but me. It's a lonely world when yuh get right down to it."

Only the Polish woman heard her. "Sh-h—you come my home."

"I won't go to your home. I ain't no home girl. But will yuh—will yuh let me hold the baby? Please, for just a little while?"

"Hold bebbby? Sure!" The Polish woman handed over the baby.

Goldie cuddled him; gurgled over him. "Ain't he cunnin'! An' you got nine or ten of 'em? Jeepers!" She crooned to the baby.

They mounted the flat top of the rocky hill. The sun was high enough now to be shining down on the roofs of many houses.

"Lena?" whispered Jan.

"Yes."

"We can take a train out of here for Portland."

She tightened her grip on his hand.

Hoey put his arm around his wife's waist, drew her closer to him: "What would you say, Mollie, if I went to sea again?"

Mollie smiled fondly: "I'll say God keep you, Sailor Boy, and bring you safe back home."

Down the hill they went, toward a city that loomed incredibly fair and shining under the morning sun: down the hill they went in procession: Jan and Lena, Hoey and Mollie, the Polish woman and Goldie holding the baby in her arms, Goldie crooning, the baby kicking up its feet inside the blanket.

THE END

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